

HALESOWEN CHRONICLE



Thursday, March 13, 2014

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Page 9

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Home Secretary in visit to talk to police

Page 18

What's On

Entertainment and television listings

Page 22



Owner of dog must pay £2k for sheep

A DOG owner has been ordered to pay more than £2,500 after his pet Husky killed three sheep on a farm.

Ian Passmore was out walking his two Siberian Huskies near Himley Hall when one of the pets, that was not on a lead, ran off. The dog, called Gambit, ran into fields at Park Farm where more than 1,000 sheep grazed.

Cannock Magistrates Court heard that the dog on January 14 killed two sheep. A third died later from its injuries. The animals were valued at £80 each.

Mrs Sara Beddow, prosecuting, said: "The dog began chasing and singling out sheep while Mr Passmore was searching for him."

"He said the fence was down and had been for some years. The incident ended with the arrival of the farmer and the police."

Passmore said: "My dog was rescued when he was 14-months-old and he is fine with people and children I have never had any problems except for what happened on January 14."

Passmore, aged 43, of Malthouse Drive, Dudley, admitted one charge of owning a dog worrying livestock and another of not keeping his dog under proper control. He was ordered to pay £630 costs and £2,000 compensation.

Pampering treat offer

BEACON Centre for the Blind is asking for nominations for women in the West Midlands who deserve a pampering treat.

The charity is hosting a fundraiser on March 27 and is offering one lucky woman a makeover.

Community fundraising officer Jo Field explained that they wanted to treat a deserving lady as part of their ultimate indulgence evening supported by the Francesco Group.

For details visit the Beacon Centre for the Blind's Facebook page.

COUPLE'S ROOF FRAUD MISERY

A CANCER sufferer and his wife have spoken of their battle for justice after falling victim to a cowboy roofer.

Maurice Rudge, aged 79, had only just suffered a stroke when he and his wife, Janet, were misled into having work done on their Halesowen home by Jason Charles in August 2011.

Charles knocked on their door saying he was working nearby and had noticed two chimneys on their property needed re-pointing. He told the couple they were in a 'dangerous condition'.

But the job was not completed despite the couple making constant phone calls to the company.

Charles was found guilty of five charges of fraud by a jury at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Tuesday.

He was also convicted of participating in a fraudulent business and engaging in a commercial practice which contravened the requirements of professional diligence in relation to a second victim.

The court heard that he had failed to provide a reasonable price for the work and scaffolding on the Rudge's property.

Charles had also failed to tell the couple they could cancel the contract at any time.

He ran his business PRS Roofing with his brother Dean Powers who was also found guilty of participating in a fraudulent business and engaging in commercial practice which contravened the requirements of professional diligence, in relation to a separate victim.

The court was told that Charles and Powers, 46, of Rainscra, Wilnecote, Tamworth, had failed to carry out the expected standard of work at another man's home in Halesowen. They

**Report by
Lee Watton**

also misled him by claiming the work was guaranteed for 30 years.

Michael Rimmer paid out £2,800 for the new fibre glass roof in October 2010 but by September 2012 it had suffered two leaks.

Mr Rudge, of Blackberry Lane, an ambulance man for more than 30 years, has welcomed the guilty verdicts.

He said: "We had no concerns about the state of the chimneys until Charles showed up. He originally said the work would cost £700 for the work. Then he came back and said it would be £700 for both chimneys. After that it was £1,000 for the scaffolding to be put up."

"I was taken advantage of, there is no doubt about that."

Mrs Rudge, 79, said the guilty verdicts represented the 'end of a very long road'. She said her husband had suffered another stroke last year and she blamed the stress.

"We are just relieved it is finally all over," she said.

Recorder Anthony Potter remanded Powers and Charles in custody until their next appearance before the court on May 14.

He ordered pre-sentence reports be drawn up but said custodial sentences were 'likely' for both of them.



Former ambulance man Maurice Rudge and his wife Janet, both aged 79, who were conned by rogue roofers

Green light for £1.2m roads revamp

A £1.2 MILLION scheme to improve pedestrian and bus routes around Merry Hill has been unanimously backed by planners.

A toucan crossing will be installed along Pedmore Road and the carriage-widened to improve safety for pedestrians.

Studies carried out by Dudley Council showed a total of 184 people crossed the road over a 12-hour period.

Officials said there would be delays caused to traffic because of the crossing but they would work to minimise this as much as possible.

Under the plans the road will be widened to allow the creation of a cen-

tral reservation. A landscaped area would be cut back to make way for the new development.

A separate scheme for changes to the junction of The Boulevard and Mill Street to provide priority to buses have also been given a green light.

Priority

As part of the plan a segregated bus lane will be created along the route giving priority for outbound buses leaving the shopping centre.

A signalised bus gate will also be installed. This will detect oncoming buses and allow them through without

being held up by lights. This scheme will be carried out by Centro rather than the council and the transport authority has secured funding for the work through the Better Bus Area Fund.

Members of Dudley Council's development control committee have now approved both schemes.

Committee chairman Councillor Qadar Zada said: "Councillors agreed both of these plans unanimously and they will be of enormous benefit to the area."

"There are two main priorities – the safety of pedestrians and also increasing the efficiency of public transport."

Offering care at home for the dying

A CARE plan will be trialled in Dudley borough to allow more people with cancer and other life-limiting illnesses to spend their final days at home.

A partnership has been forged to try out the 'care at home' scheme for two years.

Macmillan Cancer Support has teamed up with Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Hospice, NHS Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group and Dudley NHS Foundation Trust for the Macmillan Specialist Care at Home project, one of six pilot schemes across the UK.

Swedish

Based on a Swedish system, Macmillan Specialist Care at Home will be led by a community consultant doctor, who will coordinate teams of doctors, nurses, support workers and other professionals.

People affected by cancer and other life-limiting conditions will be referred for specialist care and offered as much medical treatment and support in the home as possible. The programme starts next month and runs until 2016.

Ciarán Devane, chief executive of Macmillan Cancer Support, said: "Three quarters of cancer patients would prefer to spend their final days in their own home with family and friends."

Timber fire arson probe

ARSON is suspected after hundreds of tons of timber went up in flames in a blaze at Bloomfield Recycling in Tipton on Sunday.

The fire service believes the blaze may have been started deliberately as investigations into the fire continue.

Firefighters remained at the site in Bloomfield Road extinguishing burning embers using high powered water jets. More than 2.5 million litres of water were poured onto the fire as crews battled the flames.

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NEWS

Building sale funds Learning Quarter

A COLLEGE training centre is being sold to generate cash towards the next stage of a multi-million pound expansion project.

The Dudley College site in Dudley Road, Brierley Hill, is on the market for £850,000.

It is currently used by a small number of students attending fork lift truck training and community-based ESOL English language courses.

The conferencing suite at the site is still available for hire while a buyer is found for the building.

But bosses are planning to relocate the training courses to Dudley sites while other courses will continue at community centres across the borough and at the main campus.

It comes as work continues on the next phase of the Dudley Learning Quarter.

A sixth form centre called Dudley Sixth in Priory Road has already been built along with a vocational centre, named Dudley Evolve, in Tower Street.

Work is also under way on Dudley Advance, a £7 million hub, also in Priory Road, which will offer a range of manufacturing and engineering courses.

Disruption for traffic

DRIVERS in Stourbridge were this week warned of disruptions, as it was announced that a road will close for more than three months for work to repair a wall which collapsed more than a year ago.

The wall in Red Hill came down following a landslide on Christmas Eve in 2012.

A temporary fix was done to reopen the road soon after.

But from March 24 the road will be closed again for permanent repair work to the wall.

It will be closed between The Heathlands and Arlington Court until July 7.

Woodland grant

A £73,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund will be used to fund a three year project creating a nature reserve. The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country aims to turn Peascroft Wood, the only surviving wood in the Bilston area, into a certified reserve.

Fundraiser in round the world challenge



Sam (right) and Dave

A CHARITY worker is planning to run and row 32,000 miles in a record-breaking bid to raise enough money to pay for a new chemotherapy suite at a hospital.

Sam Greatrex was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma in 1995 as a 10-year-old.

He was treated at Birmingham Children's hospital and his fundraiser is a way of saying thank you.

Now 29, the Halesowen man has set himself his own Lap The World challenge.

He is hoping to break the existing

record for the Fastest Human Powered Circumnavigation of the world and he aims to raise £240,000 towards the new chemotherapy suite.

Gruelling

He to set off in September and will be accompanied by a man who is no stranger to gruelling global charity challenges, 'Blind Dave' Heeley, of West Bromwich, for the first weeks of the epic journey.

Mr Greatrex plans to row across 14,000 miles of ocean and pedal 18,000 miles through four conti-

nents, before arriving back in Birmingham after 580 days.

To train for the event, Mr Greatrex is rowing and cycling for around two hours every day alongside his normal working week for Macmillan Cancer Support.

He said: "The central motivation behind the journey is to raise £240,000 for Macmillan, a charity that provided fantastic support when I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma in 1995. The £240,000 will help build a new chemotherapy suite at a hospital.

"Blind Dave is hoping to keep me company for the first few weeks of the journey by joining me on the start line in Birmingham and cycling down to the south coast where we'll row across the English Channel. Dave will be the first blind person to complete the crossing."

The duo have already had one practice race against a team of cyclists from Porkers Ltd in West Bromwich. 'Blind Dave' and Mr Greatrex took on a 100km cycle race on the exercise bikes at Pure Gym in the town.

Police target shops selling gear for growing cannabis

ELEVEN shop owners and workers have been sentenced after they sold hydroponic gardening equipment for drug cultivation.

Stores across the Black Country and Birmingham were targeted by detectives in February last year following a five-month undercover operation.

Searches were carried out at business and home addresses of those linked to hydroponic suppliers, with £45,000 in cash seized as well as between two to three kilos of cannabis worth in the region of £20,000, and drug paraphernalia.

Police act on possible daylight drug deal

DETECTIVES are investigating a suspected daylight drug deal that was spotted by officers outside a takeaway.

PCs Ross Evans and Stuart Lewis where on patrol at 11.30 am on March 4 when they spotted two men acting suspiciously outside a takeaway in Stourbridge Road, Dudley.

As they approached the black Volkswagen Passat a package was thrown out of window.

Both of the men inside the car were arrested on suspicion of possession with intent to supply a class A drug and following a search of the vehicle they uncovered £530 along with mobile phones.

The 32-year-old driver of the Passat and his 38-year-old passenger remain on police bail while enquiries continue.

The package is being tested.

To report any suspicious activity, call police on 101 or contact the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

The 11 were then arrested in what was an operational first for West Midlands Police in targeting the specialist businesses.

They were sentenced on Tuesday at Birmingham Crown Court after having pleading guilty to assisting others in cannabis production at a previous hearing.

Self-employed Neville Henry, aged 54 of Marshall Street, Smethwick, and who owns Extra Grow Hydroponics at Wednesbury Trading Estate, was handed six months in prison.

Shopkeeper Simeon Keane, 31 of Severn Acres Road, Halesowen, owner of Growpatch Ltd, High Street, Blackheath, was sentenced to 17 weeks suspended for 18 months.

Packer Paul Williams, 28, of Bristol Hall Road, Hildbury, employed at Grow World, Bristol Road South, Northfield, was sentenced to 18 weeks in prison.

Lorraine Mardenborough, 52, of Saracen Drive, Sutton Coldfield, who co-owns the Red Eye Jungle Shop in Stafford Street, Walsall, was given a six month sentence suspended for 18 months.

The seven others are from Birmingham, or are involved with shops in the city.

Candles lit in memory of Christina



A portrait of Christina inside Birmingham Cathedral which was filled for the anniversary memorial service

FAMILY and friends of Halesowen schoolgirl Christina Edkins, stabbed on her way to Leasowes High School a year ago, filled Birmingham Cathedral for a memorial service marking the first anniversary of her death.

Christina, 16, was killed in a random attack while sitting on a bus in Birmingham, which was taking her to school for a mock exam, on March 7 last year.

Hundreds gathered for the service with the cathedral's balcony having to be opened to accommodate all those

wanting to pay their respects to the popular teenager.

Most people at the service were wearing purple, Christina's favourite colour.

The service started with a poem read by Christina's aunt Mandy Rammed called Christina — Our Princess.

The poem spoke of how the teenager, who wanted to become a nurse, was missed by her family but how they still felt her spirit with them.

During the hour-long service Leasowes High School Chamber Choir

performed three songs — The Lord is My Shepherd, You Don't Know You're Beautiful and You Raise Me Up.

Christina's cousin Savannah Jordan also read a poem she had written called Our Princess Christina. It spoke about the fun the pair had growing up. Two of Christina's school friends also read a poem they had penned talking about their friendship and their experiences together.

Members of the congregation were also given the chance to light a candle in Christina's memory.

NEWS in brief

Sycamore pick up play award

AN ADVENTURE centre has been chosen as among the best in the country.

Dudley Council-run Sycamore Adventure centre, at Old Park Farm, has won the Outstanding Playwork Provision category of the prestigious Playwork Awards. The awards recognise the importance of providing quality play opportunities for children.

The team at Sycamore, which has received nine awards since it was launched, has 25 qualified members of staff and volunteers.

Nurses will get tablet computers

NURSES in the Black Country will get new technology including iPad tablet computers, digital pens and clinical software after a trust was given a £89,000 cash boost.

The Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is one of 75 trusts across the country to win a bid for funding. The money, from the Nursing Technology Fund, will be used on new technology to support nurses and staff in their work. Bosses say the technology will help staff work more efficiently.

Staff moving to Longbridge site

THE Midlands team of developers St Modwen and its residential business, St. Modwen Homes, are moving to Park Point, at the new Longbridge development but head office operations will remain at Sir Stanley Clarke House at Quinton Business Park.

St Modwen Homes are taking almost 6,000 sq ft of space of offices in Longbridge town centre.

Man is rescued by firefighters

AN ELDERLY man was rescued by firefighters after a fire broke out in a kitchen in Dudley.

Crews were called to Blackacre Road at around 12.40pm on March 5. The fire was started by food left unattended on a hob. Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus led the man to safety. He had suffered smoke inhalation.

Beer, bulls, bets

AN illustrated talk called Beer, Bets and Bull-Baiting will be held for Client History Society at Clent Parish Hall, in Church Avenue, on March 27. It will start at 8pm. The talk is by historian Mary Bodfish.

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NEWS

THE BEST
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RHODES

IMAGINE, a few years from now, a Spanish-speaking Texas decides to quit the United States and become a member of the European Union. In the north of Texas, an English-speaking enclave of loyal US citizens pleads for help from Washington. What would the US president do? Exactly what Vladimir Putin has done in Crimea.

UKIP is asking would-be candidates to sign a declaration that: "I do not have any skeletons in my cupboard." Which pretty much excludes all of humanity.

SCIENTISTS in Denmark say the ecology of European forests could be greatly improved by reintroducing rhinos, elephants and bison. Tell you what. Before "re-wilding" with the real things, why not follow the example of the new town of Milton Keynes when it first introduced its inner-city overspill residents to dangerous-looking beasts such as cows? Bring on the concrete rhinos.

IN ITS own little way, the Ash Wednesday edition of Thought for the Day (Radio 4) was as significant as Moses bringing down the tablets or Martin Luther falling out with the Vatican. It featured a prominent Anglican priest announcing there is no life after death. You pop your clogs and that's it, folks. You might imagine in the Lenten build-up to Easter that Canon Angela Tilly would offer a few words about the empty tomb, the risen Lord, the life everlasting and all that stuff. Nope. Her message was that we come from dust and go to dust, that death is "the loss of everything" and "we are all afraid of death and its finality." I wonder how many Christians were listening to their radios and whispering: "Yes, but . . . waiting for something a wee bit more positive and, dare I say it, religious from the canon. Instead, they got a three-minute lecture that Richard Dawkins would have been proud to deliver. If this is what passes for religion these days, it doesn't leave much room for us atheists, does it?"

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Museum gets cash to keep craft skills alive

BOSSES at the Black Country Living Museum are celebrating after receiving £263,300 of Arts Council funding.

It will be used to develop an apprenticeship scheme for college students to learn specialist craft and heritage skills. Money will also be spent creating volunteering opportunities for youngsters aged 16 to 25, as well as the commissioning of bespoke film productions and digital projects.

Andrew Lovett, museum director and chief executive said: "We are delighted to have been successful in our bid. In addition to our plans to develop a volunteer force, the financial backing allows us to establish a 10 year plan for the museum through which we will aim to become the largest and most significant open-air museum site in the UK."

Investment

Peter Knott, area director for Arts Council England, said: "Our investment will enable the museum to create a range of new opportunities for young people living in the Black Country, as well as support the growth of its cultural offer to attract and inspire visitors."

The cash has come from the Arts Council of England's Renaissance Strategic Support Fund. It supports specific developmental projects within regional museums to attract wider

by Heather Large

audiences. The Arts Council awarded over £36 million to towards 181 different projects.

The museum has previously been awarded Renaissance Strategic Support funding in 2012/13 for refurbishment of the Rolfe Street complex and in 2013/14 for the Resilient Leadership programme offering support to emerging leaders in the museum sector. In 2012 Arts Council England recognised the importance of the museum and its collection with the prestigious Designation accolade, which is recognised internationally.

The museum was opened in 1978 and buildings rescued and rebuilt at the site, including the Cradley Heath Workers' Institute.

Last year steam locomotive, the 26-ton Winston Churchill which once ran on the Earl of Dudley's mineral railway, was put on display at the front of the museum on Tipton Road.

Season opens at rock houses



Volunteer Mary Bendall making a rag rug the rock houses

THE historic rock houses on Kinver Edge are being brought back to life as a series of activities are being planned at the carved-out cave dwellings.

The rock houses were filled with the smell of baking bread for the first time in decades during a nostalgic day of activities that launched the new season at the attraction run by the National Trust.

Victorian

More than 300 visited the Holy Austin Rock Houses, near Kinver, as the homes were opened for the first time this year.

Volunteers used a Victorian range for baking and demonstrated the traditional craft of making rugs from rags.

One of the houses has been restored to how it was in the Victorian era and another is preserved in a 1930s style.

The National Trust plan to make activities a regular feature at the sandstone homes, open from 11am to 4pm Thursday to Sunday until late November.

Uncovered skeleton is '200 years old'

HUMAN remains discovered by engineers working on a £6.7 million revamp of Dudley's historic market place were more than 200 years old.

Council chiefs are now having to make an urgent application for a licence from the Ministry of Justice to rebury the remains.

Skeleton

The skeleton is thought to belong to someone who had been buried in the graveyard at St Edmund's Church - known locally as Bottom Church - near where the remains were discovered in Castle Street last week.

It is not yet known whether the person was male or female or their approximate age.

A police tent was erected over the spot after engineers discovered the skeleton on March 4. Work on that area has been suspended but the rest of the scheme is going ahead nearby.

Dudley Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for transport, said: "A conservation archaeologist visited the site on Castle Street on Wednesday, which has revealed that the human remains are over 200 years old. The council is now applying to the Ministry of Justice for an urgent licence to rebury the remains where they were found."

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

Best ever inspection gives a 'good' rating

STUDENTS and staff at Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre in Bartley Green are celebrating as Ofsted have recently rated the school 'good' with many 'outstanding' features. Behaviour was reported to be, 'exemplary, both in lessons and around the school'.

Inspectors recently returned to the Stonehouse Lane school just a year since their last inspection, following the school's best ever results in GCSE, A-level and equivalent exams in August.

They said that although some students arrive at the school with attainment, 'below the national average in Year 7' that they left the school with, 'attainment that is above national averages'.

Pride

Teaching in both the main school and in the sixth form was considered to be 'good and sometimes outstanding', as, 'teachers provide lively and exciting tasks that enable students to build on their learning step by step, asking searching questions and encouraging discussion'.

Inspectors praised students, reporting that they, 'take great pride in school, have highly positive attitudes to learning and are very keen to show a love of learning in class'.

Members of the governing body were said to have a 'deep insight into the quality of teaching' and 'rigorously check safeguarding practice' to ensure that students are safe in school.

"In order to be consistently outstanding, the inspectors said the



Headteacher Ann Davies has been praised for strong leadership

school needs to provide even more opportunities for students to get involved in the assessment of their work so that they are always clear what they need to do to improve.

Targets

Appointed in 2012, headteacher Julie Ann Davies was praised for having, 'determined leadership, promoting a clear focus on continual improvement, with a clearly articulated vision for the future'.

Ms Davies said, "I am delighted that

the inspection team agreed with our self-evaluation that we have made rapid progress in just a year, and have set ourselves ambitious targets towards even greater success.

"I am privileged to lead such a talented and committed group of staff, but I am especially proud of the way in which our students conducted themselves.

"Inspectors described our students' 'excellent attitudes to learning', which is typical of their conscientious and enthusiastic thirst for learning."

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Skills of the 1930s used in zoo work

WORKERS are using methods and materials from the 1930s as they restore two iconic buildings at Dudley Zoo.

Chief executive Peter Suddock said it had been a 'fascinating' experience to carry out renovation work on the zoo entrance and Safari Shop.

Alongside a more spacious shop, the building will offer a new entrance with direct access from an extended zoo car park and there will be a Tecton Interpretation Centre. The centre will explain the significance of the zoo's 12 Tecton buildings, designed by Russian architect Berthold Lubetkin and constructed between 1935 and 1937 using a pioneering system of reinforced concrete.

Heritage funding has enabled repair work to be carried out for the first time on four of the structures - the shop, the familiar wave-like entrance, bear ravine and kiosk one, as part of a multi-million pound makeover.

Mr Suddock said: "All concrete repair work has been completed employing the exact formula used when they were built and we've also identified original paint colours."

Costs for the entrance and shop are £417,000 with £200,000 funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and remaining £217,000 paid from the zoo's own coffers.

Concern over benefit sanctions being misapplied

MORE than half of sanctions imposed against people's benefits in Sandwell borough were overturned after a review during the first financial quarter, figures have revealed.

It has prompted Sandwell Council's finance boss Councillor Steve Eling to say there is something 'badly wrong' with the system. Sanctions may be imposed for reasons including missing appointments at job centres or being deemed not to be doing enough to find work. They can lead to claimants having benefits payments suspended.

But figures obtained by Sandwell Council from the Department for Work and Pensions show that, for sanctions against people's Jobseeker's Allowance between April 1 and June 30 2013, there were 690 'requests for reconsideration' - 350 were upheld.

Council could borrow £2.5m

A MULTI-STOREY car park with 250 spaces is set to be built in Dudley with the cash-strapped council planning to borrow the £2.5 million required for the scheme.

Work on the car park in Tower Street could begin next year under the proposal which was expected to be approved by Dudley Council's cabinet committee last night.

Details of the scheme were first announced two years ago following repeated calls from traders for more parking in the heart of the town centre.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for transportation, defended the proposed loan, claiming the parking was a justified investment to support town centre regeneration.

The council needs to make £34m of cuts over the next three years with bosses warning around 40 jobs could be axed.

In a report to Wednesday's meeting, officers said the council would manage the car park itself.

There were also 10 requests for reconsideration over sanctions on Employment and Support Allowance, with all 10 being upheld. Ten official appeals were made against sanctions on Jobseeker's Allowance, none of which were upheld.

Councillor Eling says he is now determined that the council will find ways to support those looking to have sanctions reviewed.

He said: "This tells us there is something badly wrong with the way benefits sanctions are being applied. "We are not arguing against sanctions, because in some cases they need to be applied. But with the evidence that we have, that such a high percentage are being improperly imposed, it suggests there's something wrong that's adversely affecting Sandwell residents, and something has got to be done about that."

"We are getting people presenting themselves to us for crisis support, and I'm looking at how we can support them to appeal where they have been wrongly applied. They need to be supported to challenge these sanctions."

La Bow-wow-heme for Danny



Carrie-Anne McNally of the New Alex with Danny the dog

THEY say you cannot teach old dogs new tricks - but 12-year-old Danny is up for any challenge.

He already holds the Guinness World Record for most theatrical performances by a dog, many of them in the musical Annie.

Opera

The Wheaton terrier starred in more 1,400 performances of Annie as the orphan's canine pal Sandy. But he turned his attention to Puccini's romantic opera at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre last weekend.

Danny shared the stage with celebrated international soloists sopranos Elena Dee and Ecaterina Danu, and tenors Sorin Lupu and Nicolae Busuioc.

The show's director Ellen Kent said: "People say never work with children or animals but I love to do both."

"The first time was 20 years ago when my pet cat Holly Go-Lightly was in one of my productions. Since then we've had horses, goldfish and even a golden eagle on stage."

NEWS in brief

High note for the new cancer choir

A CHOIR for people who have been affected by cancer have performed their first concert. Members of Second Chance Cancer Choir sang songs by Abba and John Denver at Yew Tree and Tamebridge Community Centre.

The group was set up in January by Helen Shorthouse. The 49-year-old from Yew Tree Estate started the choir after her partner, Debby, was diagnosed with cancer. She said: "At each concert we will have collection buckets to raise money for Cancer Research. Our next big performance will be on March 21, again at the centre."

For more information call 07951 011297.

Delays caused as lorry sheds load

MOTORISTS faced delays after a lorry carrying heavy metal shed its load on a busy island in Halesowen last week.

Officers from the Central Motorway Policing Group were called to the island at the end of Manor Way, where the busy dual carriageway meets Junction 3 of the M5 motorway, at around 12.46pm Tuesday, to reports of a lorry shedding its load.

When officers arrived they found that a seven ton cylinder of compressed metal had slid off the back of a truck and ended up colliding with a metal barrier.

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW

WITH
MARK
ANDREWS

LIKE all the great thinkers of our time, 20-year-old Gemma Worrall decided to share her thoughts on the delicate situation in the Ukraine on Twitter.

Of course she did. Does anybody ever have any thoughts on anything these days, without announcing them on Twitter?

But the Blackpool lass's musings on the stand-off between the West and Russia over the future of Crimea really are worth savouring.

"If barraco banner is our president, why is he getting involved with Russia, scary," she wrote.

And that certainly is scary. Not only can she not spell Barack Obama's name, she appears to think Blackpool is part of the United States. And next year she will be allowed to vote at the General Election.

Incidentally, although admitting politics is not her strong point, she claims to have 17 GCSE O-levels. Seventeen. However did she manage that? It is tempting to quip that arithmetic is probably not her strong point either, but the sad thing is that she probably does have the qualifications she says. Still, good to 'no' the exam system hasn't been dumbed down.

□□□□□

THIS week Britain marked national No-Smoking Day, with events held all around the West Midlands.

Meanwhile, the campaign group Tobacco Free Futures warned (before hastily re-editing) that it was 'fighting back against an industry which kills 2 in 1'.

Now that is a deadly industry. Presumably arithmetic is not their strong point either?

□□□□□

ANOTHER example of the stupidity rife on our social media network is the furore surrounding Emily Slough, a young mother who had been pictured breastfeeding her daughter in Rugeley town centre.

The photograph was then posted on Facebook by some sad case who branded her a tramp. I can't help but think that if the sight offended me so much, I would be wanting to get it out of my mind, not posting it on the internet so thousands of other people could see it.

And then finally, we have the reaction of Mrs Slough herself, who has responded by organising a mass breast-feeding session in Rugeley town centre on Saturday.

Please ladies, enough. I know breastfeeding is natural, but so is taking a leak. It is generally accepted that it is bad manners to do that in the street.

And while the Facebook comments were nasty, vitriolic and spiteful, it is really right for a bunch of militant breast-feeders to use their children as props in a tasteless publicity stunt?

Both sides need to take a deep breath and calm down. There are more important issues to get worked up over.



The new Jaguar Land Rover engine factory



Tata Steel is investing heavily in its Wednesfield site



The £11m investment in the new Tipton Leisure Centre

Skills gap key to better business

SIMON PENFOLD outlines the good, the bad and the ugly of the Black Country's economic situation

WE are building more homes in the Black Country, our children are doing better at school and more people are in work than there were a year ago.

There has been a 3,000 hike in the workforce across Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell.

However, the nitty-gritty of this is that 9,000 new jobs created in the private sector were partly wiped out by the loss of 6,000 public sector jobs as Government spending cuts bit deep across local authorities and state-funded bodies.

At the same time, people in the Black Country are much less physically active than the UK average. And figures for infant death, diabetes and childhood obesity are significantly worse than for the UK as a whole.

The facts and figures are all revealed in a newly published Economic Review, a look at the Black Country and the state we are in. It has been compiled by the economic intelligence unit of the Black Country Consortium, the organisation set up between local business leaders and local authorities more than a decade ago to co-ordinate their efforts to regenerate the area.

To keep track of progress – or the lack of it – the Consortium compiles huge amounts of data every year.

One of the key numbers it produces is something called the 'output gap'. It effectively compares how well the Black Country is performing as a local economy, and how well it should be performing compared to the rest of the UK.

The bad news is that an overall assessment shows the Black Country's economy is around £7.8 billion short of where it needs to be. The worse news is that figure has been getting bigger.



Dudley Castle is still key to attracting visitors to the area

Since 2004 it has gone up by around £3 billion, and last year it rose another £200 million.

This is partly because we have too few people in jobs, and partly because our people don't have good enough skills. But the biggest problem is that the Black Country economy lacks dynamism – it underperforms in terms of competition, investment, innovation and enterprise. We simply don't create enough businesses.

In the UK as a whole, for every 10,000 people around 42 businesses are created every year. In the Black Country that

falls to just 30. Across the area that means 1,453 businesses that should be started, aren't.

And the area loses out in terms of wages, spending, taxes and all the other benefits healthy businesses bring to an area to the tune of £5.4 billion. But the businesses we do have are often doing very well indeed.

Around 90,000 people in the Black Country have jobs in what is now called the High Value Manufacturing sector. That is firms making parts for cars, planes, oil rigs, pipelines and anything else that requires engineering know-

how and precision. The result is that the Black Country has become the heart of the UK's engineering components industry. Parts made in Dudley, West Bromwich, Oldbury, Walsall or Wolverhampton are now going into virtually every car and aircraft now being produced in the UK.

Companies like Jaguar Land Rover, with its new engine plant on the i54, and Tata Steel, with its major investment at the Wednesfield Steelpark, see the Black Country as an area with a manufacturing future. But that has brought its own set of problems – the biggest of which is the region's skills gap, says Stewart Towe, chairman of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Mr Towe said the skills issue was 'absolutely critical' and is appealing to more young people – and their parents – to consider careers in engineering and manufacturing. Mr Towe, who is also head of Smethwick manufacturing group Hadley, said: "One of our biggest problems is that we have too many 'lifestyle businesses'."

Earnings

A lack of skills is a big factor in another area where the Black Country is still losing out: wages. The average earnings for a Black Country person in full time work last year was £23,256. That is up £216 on the previous year but still £3,761 short of the national average.

Unemployment remains high, at 11.2 per cent compared to eight per cent nationally. To get us up to the national average would mean more than 16,000 people finding a job.

Transport is another big issue, and the last year has seen work under way on the £36 million M54 junction 2 scheme, improving access to the i54 business site, as well as the £25m A41 West Bromwich Underpass.

The Economic Review shows that the Black Country is making progress in areas such as education and training, building new homes and – gradually – increasing jobs. But it also underlines that this area has a long way to go.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1984

A NAKED duel on a nippy December afternoon landed two men with £50 fines. Lichfield magistrates fined the men for behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace following the bizarre stunt, which took place in broad daylight in front of men, women and children.

FORMER Mayor of Wolverhampton, Ted Lane, thought to be Britain's longest serving councillor, was facing expulsion from the Labour Party after 67 years. Councillor Lane had announced he would stand as an independent Labour candidate after being deselected by his ward party.

THE leaders of 13,000 Staffordshire miners urged their men to join strike action which had paralysed half of the country's pits. The Midlands National Union of Mineworkers said a ballot would take place.

1994

A LOCAL authority defended its decision to threaten a man with court action over £1 owing on his council tax. Clive Hayward, of Willenhall, was sent a demand after paying his £431 bill in 10 instalments of £43. "I thought they would have added £1 to one of the instalments," he said. "The council has been ridiculously heavy-handed."

FRANK Sinatra was reported to be in good shape and anxious to return to the stage days after collapsing during a concert in Virginia.

POLICE removed the distinctive sign outside the Gloucester 'House of Horrors' after a ninth body was found buried at the site. Its owner, Gloucester builder Fred West, appeared before magistrates in the city charged with five more murders, in addition to the three charges he was already facing.

2004

TWO young women were rescued after their car plunged 18ft into the River Severn near Ironbridge, forcing them to clamber onto the roof as the vehicle sank into freezing waters. It was believed the driver had served to avoid a badger.

THOUSANDS queued outside Birmingham's University of Central England to audition for the Big Brother house. One hopeful got a friend to film him running through a supermarket in swimming trunks while another dressed in a chicken outfit.

A YOUNG man in the congregation of a Wolverhampton church was forced to empty his pockets by fellow churchgoers after being caught stealing from the collection plate. He fled empty handed.

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Murder warrants capital punishment

WITH modern technology and, in this case, television evidence and admission of guilt, any thinking person might accept that the premeditated murder of a British soldier on a British street warrants nothing less than capital punishment.

Furthermore, if we lived in a true democracy where the wishes of the majority are listened to whilst at the same time providing checks and balances to protect minorities, the monsters responsible would currently be awaiting the rope.

To religious readers who believe that we should never take a human life and that

only God can judge, I say that as God seems to have delegated his work to mankind in every other sphere, it therefore seems appropriate that we should also take this into our purview.

If it is appropriate to kill our enemies on an industrial scale in time of war, what is the difference between death in battle or death at the end of a hangman's rope? The only grouping who can genuinely claim to be against capital punishment are conscientious objectors.

A M ETHERIDGE
Sedgley

Toilet is in wrong place

CASH-STRAPPED Dudley Council are going to knock down a perfectly good toilet block so that we can have a view of the castle. The new toilet will be in what was Leveins furniture store.

Dudley Council do not own this property and will have to pay rent, which means the public will be charged 20p to use the loo. The council have not taken into account that mothers with young children and the elderly with shopping will now have to cross a busy road and have a walk to the new toilets.

Also I have watched as children have come running out into the market place from the toilets. What happens when they do this from the new toilets into the path of Thanks again, Dudley councilors.

D E WALKER
Dudley

Thanks to hospital for care... but

A BIG thank you on behalf of my sister June Wise, myself and all family members to Russells Hall Hospital.

My sister has recently been discharged after spending 11 weeks in the hospital. The first 11 days in the Critical Care Unit following surgery. The doctors, nurses and all the staff on critical care were first class, private could not have been better.

Special thanks to Dr Patel who visited my sister every two weeks on each ward she was on, he became a very good friend.

She wants to thank all the doctors and staff who nursed her back to good health, too many to name. Best wishes to the many friends she made.

The worst part were the meals, which need a good overall, food is part of the recovery. The other big moan is getting on the car park at afternoon visiting and the charge which does not go to the hospital.

V CARTWRIGHT
Dudley

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

Dudley
@expressandstar.co.uk

Z-Cars actor was always a joy to watch

I AM sad to hear of the death of James Ellis, aged 82, the actor who played Bert Lynch in Z-Cars during the 1960s and 70s.

He was a fantastic actor and a joy to watch.

When Walsall's very own Frank Windsor, who played Detective Sergeant John Watt in Z-Cars, was in a scene with James, it certainly brought the series alive and it suddenly dawned on the audience why Z-Cars was such a popular BBC TV drama. Frank was a pupil of Queen Mary's Grammar school.

The themes of the show could be light-hearted, serious and dark, from racism to child abuse, and it dealt with the real life issues of

Britain in a brave and enlightened manner.

Often the stories were shown to an audience that had for years been brought up on the cozziness of Dixon of Dock Green and PC 49.

Z-Cars became the daddy of all TV Cop shows, eventually earning itself a spin-off drama called Softly Softly.

We have James Ellis, and Walsall's Frank Windsor and all the others involved in the series to thank for that ground breaking period in TV.

I was under the impression James Ellis settled and lived in Dudley for a time, am I correct?

IAN PAYNE

It would be good to talk

CAN any national company be more inaccessible than BT?

Whilst there are Orange, T-Mobile, uncle Tom Cobley and all phone shops, does anyone know to a BT shop where I can go in to get any questions answered face to face?

It really is exasperating to contact a 'talking voice' with any concerns I have, and when I do manage to get through to someone, it is somebody in some foreign land.

I despair.
Am I alone in this or are others in the same boat?

L SHELTON
Dudley

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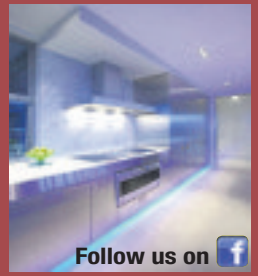


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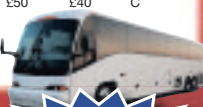


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Date	Excursion	Adult	Senior	Child	Route Code
APRIL 16+					
Sat 5th	The National Archives - Kew, London To book this trip Contact Phil Lamb on 0121 422 9131	£21	£21	n/a	-
Tue 15th	Cotswolds "Moreton Market & Bourton" 2 SEATS FOR £22 (Every Third Tuesday of the Month)	£13	£12	n/a	D
Sat 19th	Oxford - Nifty City Explorer Tour "Included Hop On Hop Off Open-Top Bus Ticket" Oxford as you please... "Shopping & Sightseeing" ALL SEATS ONLY £15.00	£25	£23	£18	C
Mon 21st	Weston-super-Mare on Easter Monday "2 SEATS FOR £22"	£15	£14	£13	B
Thu 24th	Nifty 50's Mystery Lunch Excursion (Last Thursday of the Month)	£22	£22	n/a	TBC
MAY					
Sun 4th	Highclere Castle (Downton Abbey) House, Gardens & Egyptian Exhibition	£40	£40	£40	C
Mon 5th	Llandudno Victorian Extravaganza Bank Holiday Special	£17	£16	£15	A
Sat 10th	Barnmouth... for the day The National Archives - Kew, London To book this trip Contact Phil Lamb on 0121 422 9131	£17	£16	£15	B
Tue 13th	Abergavenny Market & Tewkesbury 2 For Tuesday (2 SEATS FOR £22)	£21	£21	£21	-
Fri 16th	Powis Castle & Gardens "Nifty National Trust Coach Club"	£14	£13	n/a	D
Sat 17th	York - Nifty City Explorer Tour "Includes Hop On Hop Off Open-Top Bus Ticket" York as you please... "Shopping & Sightseeing" ALL SEATS ONLY £15.00	£28	£25	n/a	B
Sat 17th	NT Member £14	£25	£25	£20	A
Tue 20th	Cotswolds "Moreton Market & Bourton" 2 SEATS FOR £22 (Every Third Tuesday of the Month)	£15	£15	£15	A
Sun 25th	West Midlands Safari Park All inclusive Ticket (inc. unlimited ride wristband): "2 SEATS FOR £22"	£13	£12	n/a	D
Mon 26th	Weston-Super-Mare on Bank Holiday "2 SEATS FOR £22"	£18	£17	£16	E
Thu 29th	Nifty 50's Mystery Lunch Excursion (Last Thursday of the Month)	£27	-	£26	-
Sat 31st	Warner Bros Studio, London Harry Potter Studio Tour	£15	£14	£13	B
		£22	£22	n/a	TBC
		£50	£50	£40	C

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CLUB NEWS

A recipient of Maundy Money visits

MYTIME OVER 50S

MYTIME Over Fifties February meeting began with a talk by Roy Peacock entitled "The Queen's Jubilee Maundy Money."

Mr Peacock, a lay preacher of many years, was chosen by the Bishop of Dudley to represent the Diocese of Worcester at the Jubilee Maundy Service at York Minster in 2012.

This was a special service as the Queen had requested that every diocese in the country be represented instead of just the diocese in which the service was taking place. Some 86 men and 86 women were chosen to receive the Queen's Maundy Money and Mr Peacock was one of them.

During the Maundy Service after the reading of the first lesson, the Yeoman of the Guard appeared to assist Her Majesty with the giving of the Maundy Money to the first half of the recipients and again after the second lesson. Each recipient received two leather pouches of Maundy money, all newly minted for this occasion.

The Maundy Service is a continuation of a tradition since the 12th Century and has evolved into the presentation of the tokens of money for those men and women who have given service to their churches and communities.

At the meeting on March 26, in the Ambleside Room at Stourbridge Town Hall, the speaker George Hook's subject will be "Mother of Pearl".

Sweet talking from the guest speaker



Vice chairman Pamela Lane, committee member Elaine Lay, vice chairman of Compton Hospice Jeremy Hobbs, chairman Jane Emery and treasurer Gill Parsons

CAMEO LADIES

CAMEO Ladies were welcomed to the AGM on February 3, the first meeting of 2014. After the official business chairman Jane Emery welcomed Emma Scott who gave an interesting talk on the history of sweets.

Members enjoyed samples of sweets followed by refreshments arranged by the committee.

Jane was delighted to then welcome Jeremy Hobbs, vice chairman of Compton

Hospice, to present a cheque for £1,500 for a chairbed for patients. Monies were raised from events and raffles during the year. Each member was given a gift to commence the celebrations for the group's 20 years as CAMEO, Come And Meet Each Other.

For further information on the club call 01902 330727 or 01902 844836.

See how fortunes changed

SEDGLEY HISTORY

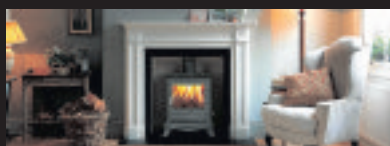
THE next meeting of the Sedgley Local History Society takes place tonight (Thursday March 13) at 7.30pm in St Andrew's Church, Bilston Street.

The speaker is Keith Hodgkins, chief chairman of Tipton Civic Society and passionate Black Country heritage campaigner. Keith's archive photographs

of Dudley show the town from the 1900s to the 1970s. In 1939 the small Worcestershire County Borough, surrounded by Staffordshire, covered 4,067 acres, only 200 more than Sedgley Urban District. However, the population of 62,100 was three times that of Sedgley's. The evening is an ideal opportunity to view the changing fortunes of the self styled 'Capital of the Black Country', with its 11th century castle, medieval market place, Zoological Gardens (opened in 1937) and once vibrant shops. The evening is sponsored by the Sedgley office of estate agents Taylors.

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NEWS

Peaky Blinders return to the Black Country

THE smog filled streets of 1920s Birmingham where only the toughest survive in a community beset by poverty, police violence, gang warfare, and loyalties are tested by Communist and Irish Republican causes.

Millions glued to their television sets each week are captivated by these evocative streets, homes and smoky pubs ruled by family bonds.

The critically acclaimed BBC drama Peaky Blinders is returning for a second series this autumn and filming has begun on the second series of the hit TV show, not in Birmingham but in the Black Country.

It tells the story of the Peaky Blinders, a gang known to deal with anyone who stands in their way with a deft swipe of razor blades protruding from their flat caps.

The Black Country Living Museum welcomed film crews this week for the second series running to use its atmospheric canal side locations to shoot scenes.

It is seen at a coup for the Black Country as producers say there are not enough suitable period locations in Birmingham to film there.

Those visiting the museum last week were able to catch a glimpse of the stars on set.

Many got close enough to capture the stars on their camera phones including leading man Cillian Murphy who plays the gang's chief Tommy Shelby.

Cameras were brought into the museum, off Tipton Road, Dudley, ready to set the scene for the production, although part of the site was closed off for the filming to take place.

While the show's characters are often seen sporting sharp suits or fine frocks, the streets in which they lived



It's a rare smile from gang boss Tommy Shelby, actor Cillian Murphy



Sophie Rundle who plays Tommy Shelby's strong-minded sister Ada

were far from glamorous. Producers wanted to use the museum for outdoor shots using the well known canal side area near the period village.

Already the terrace of shops near the canal bridge complete with cobble streets and ornate lamp posts have been the setting for other shows, including the award-winning Stephen Polakoff drama Dancing on the Edge featuring Oscar nominee Chiwetel Ejiofor.

This month the BBC's daytime police drama WPC56 was screened featuring many of shops and sights from the 1930s Birmingham Street attraction at the museum.

But this time producers decided to focus their locations on the canal to the rear of the village surrounding the harsher looking foundry buildings. Dark shale pathways were littered with wooden boxes to create what appeared like a canal side depot.

Irish actor Cillian Murphy, who also starred in horror thriller 28 Days Later and as Batman's enemy The Scarecrow in two Hollywood blockbusters featuring the caped crusader, was on set to swagger before the cameras as the ambitious and dangerous crime boss Tommy, the drama's quietly spoken anti-hero.

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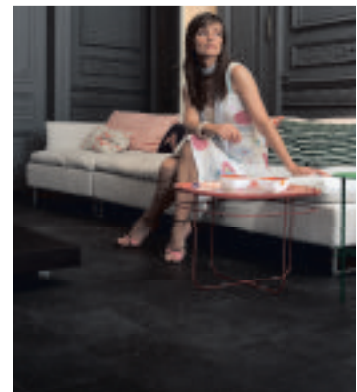


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MEMORY LANE



Julie in 1991 with Princess Diana at the opening of the Maternity Unit at the Manor Hospital



'Amazing smile' - Former Pc Julie seen in 2005



Saddlers fan Julie in the 1980's at the then Walsall FC ground Fellows Park



Julie at a crime prevention stand at the Saddlers Centre



Julie's husband Mark with daughter Danielle Roberts

Royal flower girl Julie, who lit up force with her dazzling smile

SHE met Princess Diana, Muhammad Ali and was regularly seen on police duty covering her beloved football club, the Saddlers.

Tributes have now been paid to former police officer Julie Skidmore who served in the Black Country during her 30 year career in the force, and who lost her six year battle with ovarian cancer last month.

More than 400 people attended her funeral on Monday. The popular 56 year-old from Walsall was the first female officer at Saddlers games and was even captured on camera kicking the ball back into play at the old Fellows Park ground.

She continued to hold the football club close to her heart as a fan and even worked in the Besoat Stadium control room after her retirement from the force.

During her three decades patrolling the beat in Walsall she received a commendation for bravery in 1996 after being threatened with a 14 inch sword after executing a search warrant in Pleck.

by Craig Hughes

She was known to many in the community under her maiden name Dale having joined the force in August 1976.

She mainly covered the town centre, Alumwell, Pleck and Caldmore areas and later on was also involved with CID.

The grandmother-of-one was diagnosed with cancer and would regularly travel to Surrey for treatment at the Royal Marsden Hospital.

Even during this and following her retirement she still worked as a civilian at stations including Erdington, Sutton Coldfield and at Lloyd House in Birmingham. She would help set up open days.

Following her diagnosis her family were braced she may have up to just two more years, but due to her determination and care she prolonged her life for years more.

She underwent clinical trials at the hospital and after the support she received the Julie Skidmore Climb Every Mountain Fund has been created in her honour and will raise money for the Royal Marsden

Cancer Charity. A charity walk of 40 miles from Walsall to Port Vale for the game in April is also being planned to raise money for the cause.

Mrs Skidmore, of Pelsall, passed away last month and leaves behind husband of 27 years Mark and daughter Danielle.

After being able to prolong her life in the last she managed to see her daughter get married, welcome the birth of her first grandchild Georgy last year and go to her favourite place Salzburg.

Amazing

Daughter Danielle, aged 27, said: "She was very bubbly, very infectious and it has hit everyone very hard."

"She lived for everybody else, she would do anything for anybody, she had this amazing smile."

"She remained a Wpc, she never really wanted to climb the ladder, on reflection she always said maybe I should have done it but she was always involved in the community. She was the first female police officer to police a game down at Fellows Park. She

was notorious for being on the touchline and there is a picture of her kicking the football in her uniform. She still worked as a civilian while she was having treatment."

As a police officer she helped set up Hospital Watch to help improve security at Walsall Manor.

She was on security duty when boxer Ali was in Birmingham for a promotional event and one of her biggest highlights was to meet Princess Diana when she visited the hospital's maternity unit in 1991.

Danielle, aged 27, said: "When Diana was given flowers she passed them back to her, she called herself Diana's flower girl. She loved it she was so proud."

Mrs Skidmore and the fundraising in her memory will be featured in the Walsall matchday programme for the weekend's game against Wolves.

The funeral took place at St Peter's Church in Little Aston on Monday with the police force doing a guard of honour. For more information about the fund in her memory visit the www.justgiving.com/remember/105725/Julie-Skidmore website.

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NEWS

The hair apparent to beard and beer title

THEY travelled from all over the country with one aim in mind – to be crowned the Beard of the Year.

A brewery contest to find a man with the best facial hair to be featured in a pump clip was staged by Dudley's Fownes Brewing Co and staged at the Wheatsheaf pub, in Birmingham Road, Walsall.

And 28-year-old Michael Legge, from Rotherham, won the overall prize by no more than a whisker.

There were four categories in all: full beard, pointed beard, moustache and free-style – with the winner of each going through to the grand final.

To reach the last stage Mr Legge, a joiner, beat off tough competition from Tipton's Ben Bennett in the full beard category.

Mr Bennett, a historical re-enactor from Ryland Close, celebrated his 56th birthday the day after the contest was held and said winning the competition would have been a wonderful present.

"I am really pleased with coming second in the category although I suppose it was disappointing not to make the final," he said.

"It was a really good day and a fun event. Hopefully it will become an annual event."

Mr Legge, who travelled from Rotherham especially for the event, said: "I am really excited to win the overall prize. It's not everyday you have your face put on a pump clip."

Mr Legge said he had started growing his beard three years ago as a bet.

James Fownes, who runs the brewery in Clarence Street, Upper Gornal with his brother Thomas, said: "It was a really successful event. We had around 30 competitors take part in the end with people coming in from all over the country from places like Scarborough, Essex and Somerset. When we first launched the event we did not



Winner Yorkshire's Michael Legge



Competitors at the Wheatsheaf pub



A baby finds talking beards a bit much



Free style winner Bex Minchin, right

realise they were such a large community of beard growers who regularly take part in competitions of this kind.

"Congratulations to Michael and his picture will be on the beer pump of an ale we will be brewing later on in the year." Both James and Thomas both sport beards themselves. They brand themselves as a Dwarfen brew-

ery, with all their beers having stories drawing inspiration from Scandinavian mythology and classic fantasy literature.

And they hit on the idea of launching the competition after visiting Scarborough for the Yorkshire beard day and the Wessex Beardsmen's first annual competition in Somerset.

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REVIEWS

Galileo driven by desire for knowledge

A Life of Galileo, Birmingham Rep
IAN McDiarmid gives a remarkable performance as the ageing Renaissance scientist, Galileo Galilei, driven by a restless desire for knowledge in Mark Ravenhill's translation of a Bertolt Brecht play.

But I felt tension was lacking in the story of the 17th century Florentine scientist's clash with the Roman Catholic Church, which insisted on suppressing his proof that the Earth orbits the Sun, rather than vice versa.

Rep artistic director Roxanna Silbert's production, first staged by the RSC at Stratford, crackles with energy and blurs the lines between now and then with a mix of modern and period costume.

McDiarmid's Galileo is so vain and addicted to earthly pleasures that, unlike his students, I didn't feel surprise that he failed to resist the church's demand that he recant. All the inquisition had to do was show him the instruments of potential torture.

Maybe it was not the honourable thing but I think most modern audiences would agree with his sensible ploy to save his skin and then carry on his research in secrecy.

The old man's pragmatic approach is summed up in the play's best exchange. When his disappointed student says 'unhappy the land that has no heroes', the wise scientist replies 'no, unhappy the land where heroes are needed.'

LEON BURAKOWSKI

Joe has grown up

Joe McDerry, Dudley Town Hall
X FACTOR star Joe McDerry came to Dudley as part of his bid to reinvent his career. McDerry shot to fame aged 18 when he won X Factor in 2009.

But after success finding his classical voice, he has taken his career on a more mature path.

Now aged 22, McDerry has embarked on his new Set Your Soul Alive tour and his first performance at Dudley Town Hall. It is a showcase for his vocal talents which brought him acclaim on the reality show Popstar to Operastar.

During his 90-minute show the audience was captivated by a sweetly sung version of Italian number E Pensò A Te and the famous Nessun Dorma.

He does an impromptu spot where he calls on the audience to play 'Jukebox Joe' and pick songs for him, including Over the Rainbow. Fans crowded in front of the stage for a finale including Don't Stop Believing. McDerry is performing at Cannonk Prince of Wales Centre on June 5.

ALEX ROSS



Brummie comic Jasper Carrott is in the Grand line-up

Jasper joins Grand's star-studded season

JASPER Carrott, Jane McDonald and Derren Brown are among stars lined-up for later this year at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

The veteran Birmingham comic will appear at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on September 16 with his star-studded comedy show Stand up and Rock.

Singer and former Loose Women panellist Jane McDonald will follow up her sell-out 2011 UK tour with her one-woman concert show, The Singer of Your Song. The ex-cruise ship

singer is at the Grand on September 17.

Illusionist Derren Brown is also heading back to the Lichfield Street theatre with his new stage show Infamous, from May 5 to 10.

Other productions include Happy Days The Musical starring former Sugababe Heidi Range from June 9 to 14, Mare Bolan musical Twentieth Century Boy from June 30 to July 5 and Dirty Dancing between September 23 and October 11.

Call 01902 429212 or visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk

Fairport fairly dull

Fairport Convention Town Hall, Birmingham
THERE is no real arguing with the view Fairport Convention are folk royalty. There music was seminal, groundbreaking and the band's albums and line-ups have reached iconic status.

So it's dangerous ground to attempt to point out the emperor's new clothes but their concert in the Second City was one of two halves. The first being pretty flat and lacklustre and the second less so.

Their playing was faultless because they have been doing tracks such as opener Jewel In the Crown for decades.

They treated the audience at a two thirds full town hall to tracks such as I'm Already There from their Over The Next Hill album. They pulled out a new one called Home which was a ballad sung by founder member Simon Nicol.

Individually every song was played expertly but as a whole there was something missing, there was no spark no real enthusiasm in what was, ultimately, a fairly run of the mill show.

DANNY FARRAGHER

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E-cig battery explosion risk

THEY are seen as an alternative to tobacco but West Midlands Fire Service is warning people about exploding e-cigarettes. It comes after a second such explosion in the region in as many months.

On both occasions firefighters say the lithium ion batteries blew apart because they were connected to chargers not provided by the e-cigarette manufacturer.

In the first incident, in a Birmingham office, the device had been left on a desk to charge via a computer USB port. The owner was away from his desk when the battery sprayed its hot contents towards where he had been sitting only a few minutes earlier.

A similar e-cigarette battery has since exploded when it was left to charge in a house in Solihull. The resulting fire and smoke damaged much of the room and its contents. Three people had to flee the property.

Benefits system stitched-up by former seamstress, 64

A PENSIONER pocketed more than £35,000 in benefits — after hiding away £140,000 of savings.

Janet Greenway collected a 'small fortune' in gifts and bequests from people who held her in high regard, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

But then the retired seamstress stitched up the authorities by keeping the windfall secret, while continuing to collect housing and council tax relief that her wealth made her ineligible for.

She also claimed pension credit and had picked up a total of £35,500 in eight years before

her wrong-doing was uncovered by investigators, revealed Mr David Bennett, prosecuting.

Mr Michael Brooks, defending 64-year-old Greenway, who walks with a stick, said the claims had not been fraudulent from the outset and revealed that she had repaid all the money.

Prison

He concluded: "She has learned her lesson and recognises that what she did was stupid."

Greenway, of Pippin Avenue, Halesowen, admitted failing to notify the authorities of her change in circumstances and providing false documentation.

The court heard she was of previous good character. She was spared jail but Recorder Stephen Linehan told her: "What you did was not stupid. It was thoroughly dishonest and criminal."

"The hundreds of thousands of pensioners who live on very little without resorting to fraud will be filled with a sense of outrage at your behaviour. Your conduct deserves a prison sentence but your lack of previous conviction, ill health and the fact you have repaid the money allows me to suspend the term."

Greenway was given a one-year jail term suspended under supervision for two years and told to pay £340 costs.

Cabbies get a road test pledge

TAXI drivers have secured assurances from officials to end delays on council checks on their cabs.

Around 500 members of Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association handed in a petition this week to voice their concerns.

They say Dudley Council has a monopoly over roadworthiness checks on their vehicles but does not have enough capacity to cope with the volume of work that creates, with only one bay available at one time.

Association chairman Shaz Salemsays drivers are unable to have MOTs at the same time as the annual service so can often be forced off the road twice.

Dudley Council is investing £165,000 in a new vehicle testing unit which will also provide MOTs, based at Narrowboat Way. Mr Saleem says he has been assured two testing stations will be available at the new base.

Brave boy is home after lifesaving op



Brave Gaurav Bains is back at home after months in hospital

HE has spent the past three months in isolation recovering from a bone marrow transplant that could have saved his life. But now two-year-old Gaurav Bains is back home with his family after becoming an inspiration to thousands.

Little Gaurav underwent the life-saving operation just before Christmas and has spent the weeks since locked away in his hospital room to give his immune system time to rebuild. It has been a rollercoaster of ups and downs for the brave young patient and his family but they are delighted that he is now back home in Tipton.

Parents Sunny and Gurprit took it in turns to stay at their son's bedside throughout his stay at Birmingham Children's Hospital. Mr Bains, aged 31, said: "It's brilliant, he's back at home where he belongs. It's especially good for Gaurav's sister Kiran who has been missing him."

The Alexandra Road youngster has been discharged from Birmingham Children's Hospital almost 12 weeks since he was admitted and 77 days after a stem cell transplant. Had he not received the transplant, to treat a rare condition called Monosomy 7 Syndrome, then it is likely he would have developed an aggressive form of childhood leukaemia.

Region is boosted by export figures

EXPORTS from the West Midlands hit a record high at the end of last year, underlining belief that recovery is now well under way in the region.

In the last three months of 2013 the value of exports from the region hit a high of £7.5 billion, up by £887 million.

At the same time, new figures from HM Revenue & Customs show that the region saw the highest increase in exports in 2013 in the UK. The region's export figures in 2013 totalled

£26.9 billion, up £4.2b — or 18.4 per cent — on the year before.

Paul Noon, regional director for the Government's export agency UK Trade & Investment, said: "These are, once again, smashing figures for exports from the West Midlands. They cap off a bumper year in 2013 for exports, demonstrating sustained growth from companies across the region."

"Exporting is in the DNA of companies in this region and is the heartbeat of the economic recovery."

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FOCUS ON BLACKHEATH & ROWLEY REGIS

Work starts soon on car park project

BUILDING work on a £3 million extension to a busy railway station's park and ride creating an extra 360 spaces is set to start soon.

The expansion of Rowley Regis' car park was due to begin before Christmas but was delayed as engineers sought necessary approvals. Sandwell Council's planning committee approved the scheme, submitted by transport authority Centro, last year.

It will see an increase in the Station Road car park to a total of 708 spaces.

The extra parking space will be on disused land adjoining the current car park, following the huge success of the park and ride system at the site.

A spokesman for the transport authority said: "Construction work on Rowley Regis Park and Ride is due to start in spring this year."

Business that attains goals

GOALS Soccer Centres, which saw its income rise by four per cent to £33.7 million last year, is to expand its UK operation.

The five-a-side football business, which has 43 centres in the UK including one at Rowley Regis, also saw pre-tax profit rise by four per cent to £14.8m.

Managing director Keith Rogers said a review of the business had led to a better performance.

Bid to boost bus route between major towns

MORE than £650,000 is being spent on cutting congestion along one of Sandwell's busiest bus routes with particular emphasis on the number four route which connects Blackheath with Walsall.

Transport authority Centro is working with Sandwell Council to improve the route which is also used by passengers travelling to West Bromwich town centre and Sandwell College.

by Heather Large

The move comes after more than £500,000 was spent on similar improvements to other bus routes in the Walsall area.

Upgrades to nine junctions will be made including bus priority measures.

Pedestrians will also see improved crossing facilities with five pelican crossings being replaced with puffin crossings.

The money comes from Centro's Government-funded Smart Network, Smarter Choices project.

Councillor Judith Rowley, Centro cabinet member for

fair, accessible and sustainable transport, said: "These upgrades will really help ease the flow of traffic along these already busy routes and improve journeys for bus passengers, motorists and pedestrians."

Further work to improve walking and cycling routes will also be completed over the next 12 months.

The news comes as a further boost to transport plans for residents in Blackheath, as Sandwell Council and the transport authority have already announced they are looking at ways to improve traffic flow around the town.

Pilot project to boost jobs

SANDWELL Council is working on a pilot scheme to boost young people's employment opportunities called Job Junction, which is an idea which originated in Burnley. The scheme would give careers advice and support at an earlier point in a child's education, and may be trialled at St Michael's School in Rowley Regis and Tipton's Ace Academy.



Swimmer Ellie Simmonds seen during a question and answer session with pupils

Inspiring talk by the golden girl

THE London 2012 Olympic slogan promised to 'inspire a generation' and that's what Paralympic gold medal winner Ellie Simmonds aimed for during a question and answer session with school pupils.

The 19-year-old from Aldridge popped into St Michael's CE High School in Rowley Regis to answer a host of questions from pupils. It is hoped the initiative will inspire the year eight children to achieve not just in sport but also at school and other areas.

The visit was organised as the school's head of RE is a family friend of the four-time Paralympic swimming champion.

Ellie spoke about swimming, training and how it felt to win a gold medal. She added: "I still did my GCSEs and passed them. Education is really important still, I'm trying to get my A Levels at the moment."

New homes are likely to replace firm

PLANS for more than 200 homes on the site of a haulage firm's former base in Rowley Regis have taken a step forward.

The site in Doulton Road is currently home to French logistics firm Norbert Dentressangle. But proposals to build homes and apartments on the land were supported by members of Sandwell Council's planning committee.

The scheme will now have to go before the full council for a final decision to be made.

It comes after bosses at the firm announced in August last year that they would be relocating its business to the East Midlands, with the loss of 140 jobs. Workers have been given the chance to transfer to the new site. The firm is expected to have fully vacated the site by May.

Steve's year of getting fit

THE very first customer at a new leisure centre in the Black Country has managed to lose three stone within the first year of it being open.

Steve Cartledge, 50, of Carnegie Road, Rowley Regis, has been using Portway Lifestyle Centre in Oldbury between eight and ten times a week since it opened and has gone from weighing 15 stone 2lbs to 11 stone 11 lbs.

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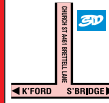
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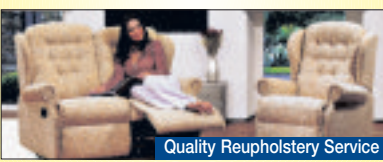


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MP supports move by firm

BOSSES at a soft furnishings arriving in Dudley have been welcomed by an MP.

Miss Daisy Manufacturing moved to Netherton from Sandwell in January, taking over a derelict tool-making site. The company, which manufactures pillows, cushions, bedding and other soft furnishings, employs 25 and is hoping to expand.

Dudley South MP Chris Kelly said: "I was delighted to hear from founders Sean and Bey Smith that they have ambitious plans to increase employment on their new site as they win more orders from UK retailers. I have also written to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills to highlight the good work of this company."

"It's great to see first-hand more evidence of the revival in UK manufacturing and the important role being played by Dudley and the Black Country."

Woman dies weeks after fall fractured her kneecap

A 74-YEAR-OLD woman died from a blood clot weeks after falling down a step at a hotel and fracturing her kneecap, an inquest heard.

Rhona Homer was staying at the Oakleigh Guest House in Stourport on September 1, 2012 when she tumbled down a small step in a corridor, Dudley Coroner's Court was told.

The 74-year-old, of Park Lane, Halesowen, was taken to Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital by her family. A cast was put on her knee and she was given blood thinning medication as a precaution due to her age and restricted mobility.

She was discharged from hospital and was able to put weight on her leg with the aid of a frame. But the retired wages clerk collapsed suddenly at her home on September 23. Mrs Homer died at Russells Hall Hospital the same day.

Her family told the inquest the step she had fallen down was along an unlit corridor and was not clearly marked.

Senior Black Country coroner Mr Robin Balmain said he would be contacting the Health and Safety Executive to ensure action had been taken at the hotel.

Mrs Homer's daughter, Angela, said: "There was a lamp at one end of the corridor but it was

not lit. Nor was there a yellow strip marking it out."

She added: "She did not seem poorly even before her death. We had just eaten and were actually discussing what to put on the shopping list for that week. My mother left the room and we heard a bump. She had collapsed."

She carried out CPR on her mother until the paramedics arrived.

Mr Balmain said the medical cause of Mrs Homer's death had been a pulmonary embolism, a blood clot preventing her lungs from working properly. He recorded a conclusion of accidental death.

Lights to go off after midnight

A SENIOR Dudley councillor has defended his cash-strapped authority's plan to turn off street lights to save money.

The council is planning to turn off lights after midnight, potentially plunging areas into darkness, from 2016 onwards. They hope it makes little difference as most people are in bed between midnight and 5am.

Dudley transport boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, said: "We have put forward a proposal to save £100,000 in 2016/17 by switching off some of the street lighting in quieter areas. We are facing significant reductions in funding from central government with unprecedented savings needing to be made locally. However, we are also investing heavily in new technology to help improve our street lighting. Rest assured, we will regularly monitor areas affected and people's safety will remain our top priority."

Police raid cannabis farm



PC Tracey Jones with some of the cannabis plants found in an industrial unit at Brierley Hill. POLICE seized 1,000 cannabis plants in a raid on a warehouse in Brierley Hill as the gang who had been growing it escaped over a 20ft wall into a canal.

As officers burst in through the front door, those who had been cultivating the crop on an industrial estate off Brettell Lane, fled out of the back.

Chopsticks

In their rush, they left behind a laptop computer, their mobile phones and dropped their chopsticks, leaving a half-eaten bowl of rice and fish stew.

The alarm was raised after the landlord of the leased warehouse in Meeting Lane, on the Canalside trading estate, realised that his building was being used to grow cannabis.

There was a pungent smell and wooden frames had been erected, covered with

plastic sheeting to create a series of rooms where a hydroponics system had been set up, powered by an illegal spur into the electricity supply.

A 'nursery' room contained around 500 saplings and two other rooms each held around 250 larger plants, nearly ready to sold as cannabis.

Pc Matt Barnsley, of Stourbridge Police, said: "It's a big, professional set-up, with at least 15 rooms."

Pc Tracey Jones, also based in Stourbridge, said: "We searched every room but they must have heard sirens and left sharpish."

"The only way out would have been into the backyard and over the fence into the canal — so they must have got wet."

The plants will be destroyed by the police Cannabis Disposal Team and the value of the drugs will be assessed.

£188k consultants' bill 'value for money'

THE £188,000 bill for consultants to help recruit police staff is 'value for money', according to the West Midlands police chief. The force is bringing in recruitment agents TMP to deal with applications for 450 jobs.

The move will bring to an end a five-year recruitment freeze. More than 15,000 people have expressed an interest in applying for the jobs and TMP will whittle that field down before candidates face an interview and checks.

Chief Constable Chris Sims said human resources staff had been lost over the previous five years as it made no sense to retain them while no recruitment was being carried out. He said the cost of consultants was better value than replacing staff on a permanent basis, as this recruitment drive was anticipated to be short-lived. He added: "This spending on external providers is absolutely value for money. It would cost us an awful lot more if we were not employing these consultants."

New name and jobs

A PUB is undergoing a name change and a revamp creating up to 10 jobs.

The Old Bush in Kingswinford is closing while £325,000 is spent on transforming the pub, which will re-open towards the end of April as the Hinksford Arms.

New leaseholder restaurateur Brett Holden and owners Punch Taverns will provide new facilities and new jobs at the pub in Swindon Road. A recruitment day is being on Sunday. Contact Stourbridge Job Centre on 0845 604 3719.

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Two days departing June 13 and October 11



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Two days departing May 17



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André Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra in London

Two days departing December 19 and 20



PRICE FROM **£185**

- Return coach travel
- Return transfers between the hotel and Wembley Arena
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation at a greater London hotel
- Seated ticket to see André Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra at Wembley Arena (upgrades offered)
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

Afternoon Tea at The Ritz

Two days departing June 15, August 10



PRICE FROM **£199**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation
- Afternoon tea at The Ritz
- Tour manager escort to The Ritz
- Visit to Fortnum & Mason and Harrods
- Glass of Champagne at the Champagne Bar, St Pancras
- Free time in London
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Emmerdale and the Best of Yorkshire

Three days departing May 9, June 27, September 19



PRICE FROM **£139**

- Return coach travel
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- Tours of Emmerdale country, Last of the Summer Wine country and the Yorkshire Dales
- Visit to York
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

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Two days selected weekend departure dates



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There are two options travelling by coach from which to choose, Saturday Night Theatre or Dine and Dance.

The Saturday Night Theatre break, from £139.95, includes a ticket for the evening show whereas the Dine and Dance option starts from £149.95, and includes an evening meal with an after-dinner disco. The ticket for this break is for the matinee performance.

Both trips include return coach travel, a choice of theatre ticket from an extensive list of shows, overnight bed and breakfast accommodation in an outer-London four-star hotel, along with some free time in the capital for shopping or sightseeing.

Pick-ups offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

*The from price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure/web page for details.

Single room supplements apply.

Organised by Omega Events (ABTA Y590X)

Royal Ascot on Ladies Day

Day trip departing June 19

Pick of the week



PRICE FROM **£89.95**

Royal Ascot is a national institution and the premier sporting and social event in the summer calendar.

Although the whole week of Royal Ascot is a fashion show like no other it's Thursday when the designer creations and millinery masterpieces are at their best and the elegance of the ladies outfits is matched only by the flair of their hats.

This day trip starts off with a brunch-time full English breakfast and a glass of sparkling wine at a hotel en route to the race-course, arriving in good time to enjoy the pre-race atmosphere and facilities.

A ticket is included for the Silver Ring enclosure where there are lots of bars, food outlets, big screen tv's, live musical entertainment, seating, lawned areas and lots of places to put a bet on (an upgrade to a Grandstand admission ticket is offered for a £45 supplement).

INFO

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- Admission to the Silver Ring enclosure (upgrade offered)
- Services of a coach driver/tour representative

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NEWS

NEWS
in briefLong sentences
deter gun crime

CRIMINALS have been put off carrying guns by the combined 124 year jail sentences handed to six gang members who shot at the West Midlands Police helicopter and officers.

Jail terms imposed on six gang members involved in the incident at the Barton Arms pub during the 2011 riots have deterred criminals carrying firearms, according to the force.

Deputy police and crime commissioner Councillor Yvonne Mosquito told the Strategic Policing and Crime Panel: "It's now not popular for young people to join gangs like the Burger Bar Crew the B5 gang or the Johnson Crew. Whilst at the time I felt strongly that those sentences were long, it has had an impact on the community."

Hosts are sought
for the big gigs

A SUMMER of free music concerts has been announced with venues in the West Midlands set to host a series of gigs.

Communities across the Black Country are being given the chance to apply for grants to host an event. Venues last year included Baggeridge Country Park.

The concerts are free and add up to England's largest summer community music festival, according to Communities Minister Stephen Williams.

They take place between July 11 and 13 with grants and support available for event organisers. To apply visit the www.ourbiggig.co.uk website.

Anger over scrap dealers finding cash ban loophole

MPS are furious that some scrap metal dealers have found a way around a ban on cash payments.

There have been dealers advertising cash for scrap metal 'like the good old days' before the ban became law in 2012. The law was extended to all metal dealers in December last year and means they must pay for metal with a cheque or by electronic transfer, so payments can be traced.

But some are registered as cheque cashing businesses meaning they can legally pay by cheque then cash it before the person bringing the metal leaves the site.

Trail

It still provides a paper trail but MPs are concerned it is a way of getting around the cash ban, that was brought in to try to curb metal theft.

Gavin Williamson, MP for South Staffordshire, sought advice from a minister after seeing an advert by Wolverhampton's Moore Street Metals, which offered to weigh scrap, pay by cheque, then cash it, saying 'leave with the cash, just like the good old days'.

The company is not doing anything illegal.

Home Office minister Norman Baker told Mr Williamson that the law allows for businesses to cash cheques as long as they are registered with HM Revenue and Customs as a 'money service business' and comply with Money Laundering Regulations. Under the rules, a scrap

dealer has to issue a cheque to a named person and the cheque must be cashed by a third party.

Moore Street Metals said it works with a third party, Cheque Exchange. Peter Chinn, partner at Moore Street Metals, said: "We became an agent of theirs and go through their procedures. It's all done through HMRC and all the records are kept on computer."

Dudley South MP Chris Kelly, who founded a cross-party group of MPs to tackle metal theft, said: "The intent of the law was clear. The minister is aware that there are some firms seeking ways around the law."

West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson, who has also campaigned on metal theft, added: "This is an attempt to find a loophole in a new law."

"It won't be like the bad old days because there will now be some form of intelligence trail. But it shows how desperate some people are after we tightened the law."

Minister checks passenger safety



Home Secretary Theresa May with James Morris MP and Inspector Tim Draper at Halesowen Bus Station

THE stabbing of schoolgirl Christina Edkins was labelled a 'tragedy' on the anniversary of her death by the Home Secretary.

On Thursday Theresa May visited Halesowen, where the 16-year-old was a pupil at Leasowes School, and spoke with local MP James Morris and Safer Travel Partnership police at the town's bus station.

The visit occurred on the anniversary by coincidence as Mrs May had been planning to visit Conservative MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis for some time.

Christina was stabbed to death on a bus by paranoid schizophrenic Philip Simelane a year ago. A memorial service was held this week at Birmingham Cathedral (see page 3).

Mr Morris has been calling for immediate prison sentences to be given to people caught carrying knives.

Mrs May did not make any promises, but said the Government had been looking at the issue.

"We have toughened up on the issue of knives," she said. "We see, sadly, too many young people losing their lives as a result of knife crime. But we

have been looking at the presumption that someone should go to prison if there are aspects of knife crime and I think there's a number of things this tragic incident raises."

"It raises the question of people coming out of prison, the question of re-offending, of interaction with mental health issues and also obviously, earlier on, I was with an inspector looking at the issues around the transport network."

"I was really interested to hear the good work being done here in relation to transport to provide reassurance."

Old Rep could be run by an academy

A SCHOOL may be about to breathe new life into an historic city theatre.

Birmingham City Council has been looking for a new firm to operate the 101-year-old Old Rep.

Cabinet members will be asked to approve proposals to sub-let the building to Birmingham Ormiston Academy for five years. The 383-seat theatre, in Station Street, was built in 1913 and was home to the Birmingham Repertory Company, led by Sir Barry Jackson.

Option

The Old Rep has been home to Birmingham Stage Company since 1992 and a long-standing venue for amateur theatre companies.

Following a two month tender process, Birmingham Ormiston Academy would have the option to extend until March 2024. The building is owned by The Vyse Trust so any transfer remains subject to the landlord's permission. The Grade II listed theatre stages an annual average of 237 performances, attended by 55,000 people.

Councillor Ian Ward, deputy leader of Birmingham City Council, said: "I am delighted that Birmingham Ormiston Academy, which specialises in creative, digital and performing arts for 14 to 19 year olds, has stepped up to the mark."

"The Old Rep is an ideal place for young people to develop theatrical skills."

Local Weekly Newspapers

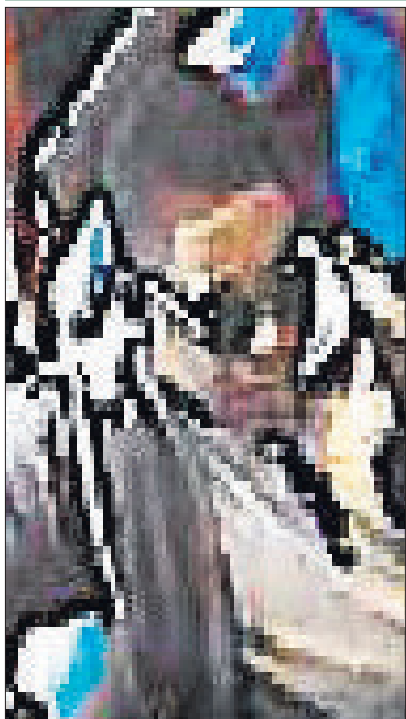
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Training starts for the new paramedics

Image of man linked to sex attack on bus



Police want to speak to this man following an attack on a woman travelling on a bus from Halesowen to West Bromwich

A MAN is being sought by police after a young woman was sexually assaulted on a bus.

CCTV images have been released by officers investigating the attack on the 17-year-old, which took place last year. The man pictured is described as black, with a chubby build, and in his late 20s.

He is believed to be about 5ft 11in with short, cropped afro hair and was last seen wearing a grey hooded top and oval-shaped mirrored sunglasses.

The victim was assaulted as she travelled on the 4H from Halesowen to West Bromwich between 5.15 and 5.30pm on October 8.

Detective Sergeant Emma Holder from the Safer Travel Team said: "This was an unprovoked assault against a young woman. She has been unable to use the service again through fear of being further assaulted.

"We are anxious to identify and trace this male and urge people who may recognise him or see him on the bus service to contact the Safer Travel Team on 101."

Many smokers still struggle to kick the habit

SMOKERS in the Midlands are struggling to kick the habit according to new figures which show the Black Country is one of Britain's smoking hotspots.

The British Heart Foundation says the highest number of smokers in the region is in Sandwell where 25 per cent of residents still light up.

Walsall and Wolverhampton were also found to have high smoking rates at 24 per cent, compared to a national average of 20 per cent.

Dudley and Birmingham fared slightly better, but were still above average at 22 per cent, while in Wyre Forest the figure was 20 per cent.

The figures have been

released to coincide with today's No Smoking Day.

To mark No Smoking Day, events are being held across the country.

Marketing officer Joy Boyes said of the 5,000 people who had approached Dudley Public Health for help to quit smoking during the past year, 2,476 had successfully given up, making it the most successful public health body in the West Midlands.

The first No Smoking Day, organised by the British Heart Foundation, was held in March, 1984, and the charity says the event has helped more than 1.5 million people give up tobacco since then.

THE BLACK Country should be absorbed into a Greater Birmingham region to help it win major investment, says the boss of John Lewis.

Andy Street, managing director of the department store chain and chairman of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, says it would make the West Midlands more competitive.

His plan comes as the LEP, made up of business and council leaders, has set out plans to bid for a share of a £1 billion government fund.

Mr Street wants the four Black Country boroughs, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall, to be part of a new 'city region', similar to Greater Manchester.

They would still have their own councils but would help Birmingham

Report by Daniel Wainwright

keep its reputation as the country's 'second city' after London — a title that is coveted by Manchester.

"Greater Birmingham does not wish to be 'second' in anything," Mr Street said. "Instead we wish to play, and be recognised for, our role as a competitive UK city-region on a worldwide basis.

Dreams

"And that's not just dreams. Our regional economy was hurt at the onset of the recession, but we are emerging more strongly than elsewhere, and steadily a new industrial and commercial powerhouse is taking shape."

The idea has been backed by Mike Wright, executive director of Jaguar Land Rover, which has invested heavily in the West Midlands, including a £500 million engine plant at the i54 business park near Wolverhampton.

He said: "Greater Birmingham is at the very heart of Jaguar Land Rover's global business. We design and engineer all of our vehicles here, and from our manufacturing plants at Solihull and Castle Bromwich we export to more than 170 markets worldwide.

"The region boasts a hi-tech supply chain and world-class research and development expertise. Today's car industry is led by advanced engineering, design and technology and the West Midlands is at the very centre of UK and global automotive research.

"The greatest opportunity for the Greater Birmingham is that we grasp the chance to become, once again, a world-class centre for engineering, research and development, and for manufacturing excellence."

Birmingham LEP has asked the Government to let it create a 'growth hub', to encourage 500 advanced manufacturing businesses to double their expansion plans over four years.

WEST Midlands Ambulance Service has offered places for 137 people to become student paramedics.

A total of 1,100 people applied for the role and another 90 candidates are still completing final assessments.

The trust will be re-opening the chance to apply later this year when it will be looking to recruit a further 70 student paramedics to increase its total number to 280.

Recruitment advisor Louise Harris said: "We were overwhelmed by the amazing response to the original advert. What was really pleasing was that we had applications from right across the region and from every community within it.

"As a service that goes out to every community, it is re-

ally important that we get applicants who represent the people we serve."

The first group of 33 successful applicants will start their careers with the ambulance service on April 22.

Over the next 30 months, they will develop their clinical skills, learn to drive using blue lights and sirens and gain invaluable experience learning people skills, so that they can treat patients in their hours of need.

Ms Harris said: "We are very proud that the pass rate for the student paramedics is about 95 per cent, which is down to a lot of hard work on the part of the students and paramedic tutors, but also an extensive support network provided by the trust such as the mentors the individuals will be working with."

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Women seeking men

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. Texts cost £1.50 per message sent.

FEMALE 65, attractive, much younger looking, slim but curvy 5ft 2ins, blonde, seeks younger man. Loves animals and cosy nights in. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4319200**

PAULINE attractive divorced female with no ties, employed with my own home, likes nights in/out, lots of tlc to give to the right person, call me for a chat, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 4110399**

SARAH, married lady seeks discreet no strings fun with gent. **ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1949 Box 408291**

JEN attractive sensual petite blonde with OHAC seeks confident fit professional male to enjoy and share good times, if that's you pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410949**

ARE you dark or bald, with hairy chest, well built, educated, verbal, articulate dom or sub, broadminded and ready to be put in your place? Curious to find out more? Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410637**

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. **Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box 366619**

29YR old black beautiful busty tall loving very sensual lady, likes football, making friends, seeking genuine white male for enjoyable loving relationship. Pls no time wasters. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410577**

YOUNG early 40's female, GSOH, kind, caring, considerate, seeks male for friendship, possible romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410847**

ADVENTUROUS attractive lady seeks no strings casual times with discreet gent. **Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box 409991**

CAROL 38 attractive romantic not looking for fairy tales just happy endings, seeking lovely male to put the sparkle back into my life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410721**

CLAIRE voluptuous tall feminine attractive lady who loves good company, fine wine/food, travel, WLTM tall professional for romance dates and hopeful fr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410627**

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. **ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box 408297**

LORRAINE 5ft 9ins, slim, 57, nurse, looking for someone to look after me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410543**

MICHELLE 37, looking for laughter fun and romance with the right guy, if you could be him and have nothing to loose call me for a chat. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410415**

TAYLOR 21 black beautiful classy intelligent, loves to have lots of fun and enjoy life to the full, seeking mature guy to make me happy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409111**

WENDY 50, blue eyes, 5ft 7ins, likes music, meals out, seeks white male, 45-55 with similar interests and GSOH for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410499**

73YR old Hereford lady, GSOH, young at heart, many interests, seeks caring, genuine gent of similar age for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410331**

NICKY bubbly curvy fun blonde, varied interests, enjoys meals out, holidays, seeking N/S male with GSOH for possible fr. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410479**

KAREN 32 a hardworking petite blonde, enjoys nights out, music, etc, WLTM for more than just friendship with similar chilled for that special someone with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410461**

LIZ 5ft 7ins, attractive, outgoing, likes walks, dogs, cooking, seeks male for fun and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410395**

ZOE 25 long haired sensual female, very naughty, broadminded and open, looking for similar fun guy for uncomplicated adult meets. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409719**

JANE attractive, feminine open-minded mature female genuinely looking for adult fun. No time wasters please. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409715**

JILL 50, attractive, 5ft, blonde, own home, no ties, likes films, reading, travel, music, good social circle, seeking that someone special. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410105**

ATTRACTIVE professional lady, 56, enjoys country walks, meals out, seeks professional gent with GSOH to enjoy the good things in life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408995**

ELAINE attractive 39yr old blonde single mum seeking respectful male/dad with similar interests for adult friendship, hopefully leading to love. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410117**

DONNA 27yrs blue eyed blonde with cute dimpled smile, loves socialising but looking for that special someone with GSOH to cuddle up with, enjoy fun/good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409733**

ABI creative fire spirited lady enjoys drama, photography, music, WLTM well-spoken patient, independent non-judgmental man. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409723**

TRACY slim dark haired beauty, petite, hardworking career, enjoys dancing, nights out, WLTM loving male who can make me laugh for an adult relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409419**

SHARON very attractive British black lady, 5'4" size 6 looking for white male to fall in love with. Beautiful people can be lonely too. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409263**

MID naughty forties female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409109**

ANITA very attractive black female, seeking mature white/Asian man to enjoy uncomplicated relationship with no ties. Any age, pls contact me, I'm very lonely. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406055**

FEMALE many interests, seeks male, 40-55 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408537**

28YR old female, seeking male with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408639**

MIXED raced lady, 34, widely travelled, seeking gent, 30-40 for romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408429**

68YR old lady, likes gardening, meals out, days out, looking for sincere gent to share time with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408413**

JENNY single independent attractive lady, tall and leggy, sensual and looking for very special male friend. Only genuine callers pls. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408285**

CHRIS blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights in/out, looking for mature sincere gent for possible fr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407615**

FEMALE looking for gent, 65-70, caring, loving and independent. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 378295**

HI I'm Jo, first time, newly divorced perfect size 10, blonde, attractive, tactile and looking to fall in love again. Age unimportant, dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409089**

SUSIE 32yr old nurse who likes cosy nights in with a good bottle of wine and spending quality times with great company, if you feel the same pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408877**

BABS 27yrs slender with dark haired passionate Italian who loves to dance, eat out, looking for nice n/s male to spend quality adult time with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407943**

BUBBLY 60 plus lady, slim, fair hair, comfy in jeans and leather jacket, seeks similar male for friendship etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408859**

JOANNA 34, in need of tlc, winning, dining being treated like the princess I am, looking for sugar daddy, that someone special to love me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408869**

MARIA gorgeous outgoing bbw 27, good fun, caring, romantic, looking for that special someone to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408733**

KIM attractive single lady new to area looking for meet new friends and maybe a new love interest. I have many hobbies and am interesting to know, pls call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408489**

TAYLOR attractive very busty curvy black female looking for fun times with open-minded male who is also looking for fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408311**

BETHANY 25yr old blonde, slim size 10 with great personality, looking for nice guy to share my life with, single dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408253**

KIRSTY blonde blue eyed size 12 nurse, enjoys cosy nights, driving, holidays, socialising, WLTM broadminded male for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409259**

KATH blonde independent female, employed with OHAC looking for fun and laughter with likeminded nice easy going male, any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407955**

TRACY slim dark haired beauty, petite, hardworking career, enjoys dancing, nights out, WLTM loving male who can make me laugh for an adult relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409419**

SUE 40's female who enjoys evenings in/out looking for someone to have some fun and hopefully get close to, go on, give me a ring. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407019**

NICKY loving caring gorgeous fun young lady who loves swimming, dancing and lots more, seeking male for text chats and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407459**

BLACK female, 45, seeking older lady, 60 plus who knows how to look after a lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407787**

PAM 71, feels younger, lots to give, socialising, theatre, country walks, charity work, seeking male to share interests with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407851**

LOVING caring young 67yr old female, 5ft 2ins, slim size 12, brown hair, likes meals out, GSOH, smoker, seeks slim, smart male with GSOH, 58-62. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 364651**

MANDY divorced independent 46yr old single mum, confident, bubbly and social, looking for male companion to share good times and to be there for each other. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407469**

NICKY 26 fun single female who has been on her own far too long desperately seeking her Prince Charming, must be tactile and possess the ability to fall in love. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407485**

MICHELLE lonely single, fit/slender, passionate, easy-going seeks male to cook for and generally spoil rotten in exchange for great companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407501**

HEATHER larger than life, cuddly built lady, scrubs up pretty well, employed, OHAC, GSOH, looking for good times with willing male, fun times guaranteed. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407307**

ATTRACTIVE female, young 49, 5ft 7ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, genuine, loyal, easygoing, GSOH, seeks tall, handsome male, 40-50 for fun times, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406135**

LITTLE bit nice and definitely a little bit naughty! Imaginative curvy blonde seeks male for kisses and cuddles. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 363428**

62YR old female, widowed, small, slim, attractive, kind, outgoing, likes meals out, dancing, holidays, nights in, seeking professional gent. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394106**

CAROL 36, looking for older experienced gent 50-70yrs for fun times only, discretion assured and expected. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401853**

WHERE have all the genuine men gone? Sue single female who enjoys nights in/out, music, seeks sincere male to enjoy good times and get close to. Pls ring. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407025**

PAULA 38 single mum with OHAC, attractive blue eyes, size 14, seeking well built male with GSOH and honest/reliable disposition, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407029**

MEDIUM built female, 66, widow, 5ft 5ins, likes walks, reading, holidays, seeks sincere male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407003**

HI I am Linda a lonely petite mature lady looking for nice caring male up to 65yrs who also has lots of love to give for hopeful relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406715**

ANITA petite 33yr old tanned, toned sexy size 10 female with very high drive and lots of energy looking for similar man for adult no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406835**

CARING female, likes Indian rock music, concerts, cinema, seeks North Staffs male, 40-55 for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406757**

LINDA bored housewife wanting to spice things up a bit looking for clean well mannered professional for discreet adult meets. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406705**

GOOD looking professional female, 51, enjoys arts, wine/dining, sight seeing, country walks, seeks special male to enjoy great fun with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406765**

DONNA 42yrs young separated female who is ready to start dating again, bubbly, attractive, blonde and raring to get going, come on don't keep me waiting! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406341**

SINGLE cuddly female, 5ft 6ins, green eyes, seeks male, 40-50 for fun and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406015**

PAT 67, attractive, likes reading, holidays, seeking female, 65-72 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405985**

TRACY 35yr old blonde petite single mum, WLTM tall male for nights out, text chats and hopefully fr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407215**

LYN slim size 10, 5ft 9ins, attractive with GSOH, OHAC, employed, WLTM genuine guy who is also looking to put some fun back into life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407195**

DEBS 37yr old professional, outgoing, bubbly, seeking genuine man for good times in/out and just see where it leads. Single dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407039**

BLONDE blue eyed 72yr old widow, GSOH, young at heart, seeks honest, caring gent of similar age for holidays, weekends away and happy times, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407113**

CHRIS 32, 5ft 10ins, brown hair, blue eyes, open minded, looking for female for discreet no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410643**

BROADMINDED professional, tall, dark male, easy going, GSOH, seeking female with GSOH for fun, friendship and relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410703**

PAUL 68, 5ft 7ins, fit, genuine, enjoys most things, likes a laugh, seeking similar female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410655**

SFT 10ins male, brown hair, blue eyes, seeks female, 40 plus for daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410589**

LOVING caring, considerate, romantic, passionate, Stoke area man, 52, OHAC, good looking, professional, seeks tactile, slim-medium built female for special occasions and exotic holidays. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407683**

LUCA 67, 5ft 3ins, seeking some one for fun and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410375**

JOSEPH attractive Asian male, seeking attractive, genuine female, 38-50 for friendship and companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410267**

SLIM attractive man, tired of lonely nights, seeks genuine lady for friendship and evenings out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410261**

PETE 6ft 1ins, body builder, likes kick boxing, daughter, seeking female, 30-40 for love. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410245**

MALE 55, 5ft 10ins, seeks lady 30-58 for cosy nights in, holidays, nights out, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410270**

STEVE 40, 6ft, muscular, dark hair, half Italian, seeks busty, classy lady, 55 plus for discreet adult fun. Where is my Sophia Loren? **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410529**

ATTRACTIVE tall, dark, professional gent, easy going, GSOH, likes sport, socialising, company, seeking similar lady with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410175**

MALE 47, would like loving, adult relationship, age/size unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410107**

DAN 36, down to earth, attractive, enjoy pups, meals out, football, boxing, cinema, shopping, seeking special female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410037**

GENUINE Shropshire male, 45, 5ft 10ins, GSOH, likes walks, cycling, music, more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409897**

NICK GSOH, looking for someone caring to share fun and frolics. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410001**

6FT male, medium build, brown eyes, dark hair, fit, likes walks, football, holidays, country drives, seeks nice bubbly lady with many interests. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409851**

PAUL 55, 6ft 2ins, intelligent, down to earth, kind, genuine, honest, seeks female, 50-60 for relationship, many hobbies. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409783**

DAVE 54, seeking female, 40-51 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409839**

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MARK 6ft, blue eyes, slim, dark hair, honest, loving, caring, down to earth, likes sport, music, cinema, meals out, seeking special lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409803**

SINGLE white 40's male, looking for strictly no strings adult fun, any age/race/looks, genuine callers. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409613**

LOCAL businessman, seeking special friend for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409585**

SAM seeking lovely lady for great times likes sports, good standard of living, looking for some fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409527**

ATTRACTIVE male, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, loving, genuine, seeks attractive female, single mum welcome, ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409471**

PETE 6ft 1ins, likes body building, kick boxing, seeks female for love and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409451**

MASON single parent, seeking female for no strings fun times, 30-45. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409443**

MALE likes nights out, holidays, seeking nice female for friendship, fun and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409363**

REVIEWS

Heartbreak and haunting hazy rock

A round-up of the latest rock and pop album releases, reviewed by LEON BURAKOWSKI

IF Lady Gaga's pop was as bizarre as her fashion sense it might sound something like St Vincent on her self-titled fourth album (out on Loma Vista/Caroline International).

St Vincent (aka Annie Clark from Oklahoma via Texas) began as a member of cult band The Polyphonic Spree before embarking on her own idiosyncratic path, though in 2012 she released a collaborative album with like-minded maverick David Byrne from Talking Heads.

There is certainly something attractive about her off-kilter pop. Maybe it is the hint of vulnerability on a soaring track like Prince Johnny, or her juxtapositions of frenzied guitars and synth stomps with the ethereal and operatic... like Lene Lovich meets PJ Harvey. Maybe too quirky for the mainstream but that's the mainstream's loss.

After a three year hiatus Wild Beasts return with their fourth album Present Tense (Domino). They have honed their dark electronic pop so it has an emotional impact on these eloquent songs, sometimes tender and sometimes angry, including a dig by the Cumbrian outfit at British bands who sing with American accents.

There are echoes of such mood masters as The Blue Nile and Talk Talk but Wild Beasts maintain a distinctive identity, helped by the contrast between Hayden Thorpe's alto vocal and Tom Fleming's more mellow croon. It's also a superb production job by Lexx and Leo Abrahams.

New Jersey's Real Estate have created a timeless, elegant rock album



New Jersey rock band Real Estate have created a timeless album

in Atlas (Domino), recorded at Wilco's Chicago loft studio it has absorbed some of that band's understated greatness. Guitars strum and chime, Martin Courtney's gentle tenor soothes and keyboards charm on an evocative album with its own special hazy melancholic atmosphere. Dreamy.

Oh, now this is the sound of a broken heart. Too Bright To Shine is a love/lament that sets the tone for Down Like Gold (Play It Again Sam), the hugely atmospheric debut album from Champs, not the Tequila outfit but brothers Michael and David Champion, a pair in their early 20s from the Isle of Wight. Recorded in an old water tower turned studio, the folksy duo somehow conjure a choral wall of sound. Other key tracks include the Fleet Foxes-like St Peters and the elegiac Only A Bullet Knows Where To Run.

Australian singer/songwriter Courtney Barnett's witty slacker folk-pop and deadpan delivery has a casual charm and raw honesty on her first album, The Double EP: A Sea of Split Peas (out on March 17 via House Anxiety/Marathon Artists). Out Of The Woodwork with its Aladdin Sane-like piano is a highlight along with the distorted psychedelic Avant Gardener, the story of a heatwave induced panic attack including the line: "The paramedic thinks I'm clever cos I play guitar. I think she's clever cos she stops people dying." Check her out at the Hare and Hounds at Kings Heath on May 18.

CHARITY FEATURE

Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal

The Great Daffodil Appeal is Marie Curie's biggest annual fundraising campaign. The appeal is vital in helping Marie Curie Nurses to provide more free care to people with terminal illnesses in their own homes and in the charity's nine hospices. Every March millions of people across the UK support our biggest fundraising event of the year by simply giving a small donation to purchase and wear a daffodil pin.



Signing up volunteer collectors:

December - February

The Great Daffodil Appeal: March Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal kicks off across the country on 1st March. Volunteer collectors will be out in force throughout the month of March encouraging everyone to give a donation and wear one of the charity's daffodil pins.

All the funds raised by the appeal will help Marie Curie Nurses provide more care for people with terminal illnesses, at the time when they need the most support.

The Great Daffodil Appeal doesn't just raise much-needed funds; it also raises awareness of Marie Curie services and the need for high quality nursing care for people with terminal illnesses.

Marie Curie wants people wherever they live to be able to have a 'good death', provided with the care they

want and need, with support available for them and their families. Research shows that currently 63% of people want to be cared for and die at home, yet only 44%, including those in care homes, do. This is because not enough or the right type of health and social care is available.

Marie Curie enables more people to be cared for and die in the place of choice, surrounded by the people and things they love, and campaigns to ensure that those who are terminally ill have faster access to free social care. As people live longer, increasing numbers of people have long-term conditions requiring more complex support towards the final stages of life.

Despite this, end of life care is an under-researched area. Marie Curie invests in high quality research to provide real benefits to people with terminal illnesses, their carers and

families. Marie Curie is the only charity exclusively funding end of life care research and invests around £3million per year in research.

Key facts

• The first Great Daffodil Appeal took place in 1986

• Marie Curie is best known for its network of over 2,000 Marie Curie Nurses, who provide care to patients across the UK, as well as emotional support for their families.

• The charity provided care to more than 38,000 people with terminal illnesses, and is the largest provider of hospice beds outside the NHS

• Since 1986, the Great Daffodil Appeal has raised more than £70 million to help fund the charity's work, enabling Marie Curie Nurses to provide more free hands-on care to people with terminal illnesses in their own homes and in our nine hospices

• In 2013 the Great Daffodil Appeal

raised over £7 million

• Last year, the charity had over 75,000 daffodil boxes across the country

• On average, each collector raised £88 last year

• The oldest collector last year was 99 years old

• In March 2014, collectors will be giving out over 9.7 million daffodil pins to supporters in exchange for a donation

For more information contact:

Tom Urpeth
Marie Curie Cancer Care
89 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TP

Phone: 020 7599 7712

Email: tom.urpeth@mariecurie.org.uk

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As seen on **BBC**

What's On!

Nominated folk singer headlines

A WOLVERHAMPTON folk club is welcoming a singer and accordion player who has been nominated for Radio2 Folk Awards no less than five times.

Jim Causley from Devon will be playing at Newhampton Folk Club, held in the upper room of the Newhampton pub, Riches Street, Whitmore Reans on Saturday. Causley has recorded with some of the biggest names in the folk world including Martin Carthy, Show of Hands and John McCusker.

Supporting him will be Wolverhampton singer/songwriter Daniel Kirk who recently released his first album and is making a name for himself on the folk circuit. The show starts at 8.30pm, tickets are £8 in advance or £10 on the door.

Irish double bill on St Patrick's Day

IRISH stars team up on St Patrick's Day at Birmingham Symphony Hall as Monday's concert features Clannad and Mary Black. That's the same day that Janis Ian joins forces with fellow US singer/songwriter Tom Paxton, at Birmingham Town Hall.

Maximo Park are at Digbeth's Institute tomorrow and on Saturday Bad Manners bring ska mayhem to Bilston's Robin 2. Chicago's Fall Out Boy rock the NIA on Sunday.

Ex-Rainbow frontman Graham Bonnett is at the Robin 2 on Monday and LA metal outfit Love/Hate play The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, on Wednesday.

Fab Four fans get ready for ultimate Beatles jukebox show

BEATLES show Let It Be will be taking fans of the Fab Four on a magical mystery tour through 40 of the band's greatest hits.

The West End hit comes to Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to Saturday, charting the rise of John, Paul, George and Ringo from the Cavern days in Liverpool, through Beatlemania to their final studio masterpieces, as a concert.

by Leon Burakowski

And it's not the only major musical around. The latest version of golden era of Hollywood musical Singin' In The Rain arrives at Birmingham Hippodrome on Tuesday and, due to public demand, has scheduled extra performances before it ends its run on April 5.

The spectacular production, a recent West End hit, will feature Faye Tozer, Maxwell Caulfield and 12,000 litres of water per performance, which means it probably will not be booked in Somerset any time soon.

A classic musical is already resident at the Hippodrome and Craig Revel-Horwood's lively revival of Fiddler On The Roof, featuring former TV cop Starkey, Paul Michael Glaser, as Jewish milkman Teyve, ends its run on Saturday.

English Touring Opera perform Mozart's The Magic Flute at the Grand on Monday and Benjamin Britten collaboration with WH Auden, the rarely seen American frontier tale

Paul Bunyan, on Tuesday. Then, on March 20 and 21, the ETO present their collaboration with the people of Wolverhampton in new community opera Zeppelin Dreams.

Wolverhampton Musical Comedy Company are hoping they are the ones that you want when they stage rock 'n' roll musical Grease at Wolverhampton Grand until Saturday.

The 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War is marked by Birmingham Rep with a stage play based on Sebastian Faulks' acclaimed novel Birdsong, from Monday to Saturday in the main House. Meanwhile, the Rep Studio offers the last chances to catch Never Try This At Home, a play inspired by such anarchic kids' TV as Tiswas, before the final performance on Saturday night.

Disney on Ice bring their latest show, Worlds of Fantasy, to the LG Arena from today until Sunday.



Cheers to our success - Lesley Joseph stars alongside Matt Slack in Hot Flush

Lesley is feeling the heat

LESLEY Joseph - aka Dorian from Birds of a Feather - is back in the West Midlands for her latest production, Hot Flush, described as a Sex And The City with HRT and songs.

The show focuses on the lives of four friends, who share tears and laughter, and co-stars funnyman Matt Slack who, like Lesley, is a veteran of Birmingham Hippodrome pantomimes. Hot Stuff is at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre tonight then at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre on March 22.

Lesley said: "When the Vagina Monologues became a hit in the theatre, it changed the game. It created a genre that hadn't been seen before. Suddenly, lots of girls, of all ages, thought: 'OMG, let's go and have a pizza, a glass of wine and a really good night out at the theatre'. Then Hot Flush came along and took it to another level. It's very funny and very near the knuckle."

Funny business at major venues

SOME of the nation's top comics are heading our way. Jack Whitehall jumps in at the deep end performing 'in the round' at mega-venue The NIA tonight. But Russell Howard aims even higher with two dates at the LG Arena on March 21 and 22.

Laughs and gasps are likely in equal measure when notorious shock troupe The Circus of Horrors bring their London After Midnight show to the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham on Saturday.

Hal Cruttenden's Tough Luvvie show is at The Slade Rooms in Wolverhampton on March 20.

Sharp-tongued Sarah Millican will rule the roost with her Home Bird tour at the city's Symphony Hall for three consecutive nights from March 22.

Last chance to see popular duo

WOLVERHAMPTON welcomes founder members of the hugely popular folk band Bellowhead on what will be their last tour as a duo.

John Spiers and Jon Boden will be at the city's Wulfrun Hall on Tuesday, March 18.

The duo will be supported by young Stourbridge blues/acoustic singer Sunjay Brayne, who is also due to play at the Shrewsbury Folk Festival in August.

Doors open at 7pm and tickets are £16.50, which includes a 10 per cent booking fee that applies however you buy your tickets.

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What's On!

Listings supplied by Press Association

SATURDAY'S TV 15.03.14

CHOICE	BBC1	BBC2	ITV	CHANNEL 4	CHANNEL 5	DIGITAL
 <p>Matthew Rhys</p> <p>The Americans ITV, 9.20pm The mid-1980s 'Reds Under the Bed' saga returns for a new run, and Russian spy Elizabeth (Keri Russell) has recovered from her injuries sustained on the last mission. Getting home in time for her son Henry's birthday party, she and Philip (Matthew Rhys) attempt to restore the façade of their all-American lifestyle. While Henry is thrilled to have his mum back (she been "caring for a sick aunt"), daughter Paige is not so easily fooled. Her growing concerns about her parents' unusual activities have continued to escalate while the matriarch was away.</p>	<p>6.00 Breakfast. 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. 11.30 Football Focus. 12.00 BBC News: Regional News. Weather. 12.15 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Italy v England (Kick-off 12.30pm). 2.30 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Wales v Scotland (Kick-off 2.45pm). 4.35 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. France v Ireland (Kick-off 5.00pm). 7.00 BBC News: Regional News; Weather. 7.15 The Voice UK. Emma Willis and Marvin Humes present the first knockout round, in which the coaches reduce their teams of seven down to the three acts that will perform in the live shows. Continues tomorrow. 8.35 The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which strangers pair up to win money. Including the National Lottery draws. Last in the series. 9.25 Casualty. Iain's troubled former Army mate Kenny takes him and Big Mac hostage, a woman takes a fall after complaining about a noisy party and Fletch's wife Natalie goes into labour. 10.15 BBC News: Weather. 10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League clashes, which included Hull City v Manchester City at the KC Stadium and Aston Villa v Chelsea at Villa Park; National Lottery Update. 12.05 The Football League Show. Manish Bhasin presents highlights and all the goals from the latest fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two, including Nottingham Forest v Doncaster Rovers. 1.25 Weatherview. 1.30 BBC News.</p>	<p>6.10 Sport Relief's Top Dog. (R) 6.40 Sport Relief's Top Dog. (R) 7.10 Sport Relief's Top Dog. (R) 7.40 Sport Relief's Top Dog. (R) 8.10 Sport Relief's Top Dog. (R) 8.40 Life on Earth. (R) 9.35 Life on Earth. (R) 10.30 Fred Dibnah's Made in Britain. (R) 11.00 Great British Railway Journeys. (R) 11.30 James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) 12.15 Mary Berry Cooks. (R) 12.45 Talking Pictures. (R) 1.35 Film: Rope. (1948) 2.55 Formula 1 - Australian Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights. 4.25 Final Score. 5.30 Llanelli House Restored. 6.30 Flog It! People are invited to try to make money by selling their antiques at auction. (R) 7.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring devises a cunning new way of foiling Hitler's invasion plans - but it results in Pike getting trapped in the middle of a minefield. (R) 8.00 The Perfect Morecambe & Wise. Eric and Ernie give their take on Starsky & Hutch, have a run-in with Henry Cooper and persuade Cliff Richard to join them in a musical number. Featuring a song by Small Faces. 8.30 Viking Art: A Culture Show Special. Andrew Graham-Dixon explores the Vikings: Life and Legend exhibition at the British Museum, learning how the Norsemen forged a network connecting their world over four continents. 9.30 QI. With Jack Dee. (R) 10.00 Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle. (R) 10.30 Page Eight. (R) 12.10 Film: Unrelated. (2007) 1.50 Film: Battle Beyond the Stars. (1980) 3.30 This is BBC Two.</p>	<p>6.00 CITV: Dino Dan. 6.10 Dino Dan. (R) 6.25 Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) 6.45 Animals. (R) 6.55 Animals. (R) 7.00 Animals. (R) 7.10 Om Nom Stories. (R) 7.15 Om Nom Stories. (R) 7.20 Sooty. (R) 7.30 Scrambled. 9.25 ITV News. 9.30 Dinner Date. (R) 10.25 Murder, She Wrote. (R) 11.25 ITV News: Weather. 11.35 The Crocodile Hunter Diaries. (R) 12.05 The Unforgettable Larry Grayson. (R) 12.35 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. 1.30 Midsomer Murders. (R) 3.25 Film: Zookeeper. (2011) 5.30 Regional Programme. Weather. 5.40 ITV News: Weather. 6.00 You've Been Framed! Top 100 Senior Moments. Harry Hill counts down through 100 memorable videos sent in by viewers, featuring giddy grandpateries, cheeky pensioners and absent-minded mistakes from the middle-aged. 7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. The Geordie duo turn the tables on Holly Willoughby on Surprise Surprise and the cast of The Commitments takes part in a St Patrick's Day-themed End of the Show Show. 8.20 The Cube. A windsurfing instructor and a seamstress tackle a series of tough challenges, from agility tests to skills trials, aiming to win a jackpot of £250,000. Phillip Schofield hosts. 9.20 The Americans. New series. A routine operation goes awry, with worrying implications. 10.15 ITV News: Weather. 10.30 Film: The Return. (2006) Thriller, starring Sarah Michelle Gellar. 12.00 Jackpot247. 3.00 In Plain Sight. (R) 3.45 ITV Nightscreen.</p>	<p>11.00 Live Paralympic Winter Games. Further coverage of the eighth day of events in Russia. 1.30 Channel 4 Racing. 4.10 Come Dine with Me. (R) 4.40 Come Dine with Me. (R) 5.10 Come Dine with Me. (R) 5.45 Come Dine with Me. (R) 6.10 Channel 4 News. 6.35 Paralympic Winter Games Highlights. Jonathan Edwards and Ade Adepitan look back at the eighth day of events in Russia, which included alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, sledge hockey and wheelchair curling. 7.05 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD. As the agents organise a full-scale hunt for their missing leader, Coulson uncovers vital information about the mystery of his death - but Centipede is baying for blood. (R) 8.00 Hostages. After one of the president's staff is murdered, the victim's colleagues decide to take matters into their own hands, while Ellen finds someone who might be a viable donor for Nina. 9.00 Film: Limitless. (2011) A failed writer acquires a drug that increases his brain power, but his new abilities attract dangerous attention. Sci-fi thriller, starring Bradley Cooper and Robert De Niro. 11.05 Film: The Run Diary. (2011) Premiere. A New York journalist relocates to Puerto Rico in the 1960s, where he is drawn into the schemes of a corrupt businessman. Comedy drama, with Johnny Depp and Aaron Eckhart. 1.20 The Good Wife. (R) 2.05 Hollyoaks. (R) 4.10 Trans World Sport. 5.05 Mobil 1. 5.30 Live Paralympic Winter Games.</p>	<p>6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 Access. 10.15 Police 5. (R) 10.45 It Takes a Thief to Catch a Thief. (R) 11.45 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! (R) 12.45 The Hotel Inspector. (R) 1.45 Film: Kate & Leopold. (2001) Time travel romantic comedy, with Hugh Jackman and Meg Ryan. 3.55 Film: Columbo: Publish or Perish. (1974) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk. 5.25 Film: Columbo: Prescription Murder. (1968) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk. 7.05 NCIS. The unit is tipped off about terrorist activity, but two agents are murdered during the ensuing investigation - and Paula Cassidy holds herself responsible for the tragedy. (R) 8.00 NCIS. McGee is shocked to discover that a double murder appears to have been inspired by his latest novel - and realises one of his colleagues could become the killer's third target. (R) 9.00 NCIS. Jenny Shepard tries to solve the murder of an underworld source who was prepared to give information on the activities of arms dealer La Grenouille. Starring Lauren Holly. (R) 9.55 5 News Weekend. 10.00 Live Boxing. Coverage of the first two quarter-finals in the Maxi Nutrition Knockout from the Rivermead Leisure Centre in Reading, where the light heavyweight tournament begins. 12.00 Super Casino. 3.10 Benidorm ER. (R) 4.00 Wildlife SOS. (R) 4.25 Make It Big. (R) 4.50 The Funky Valley Show. (R) 5.00 Angels of Jarm. (R) 5.10 Hana's Helpline. (R) 5.20 Angels of Jarm. (R) 5.30 The Funky Valley Show. (R) 5.40 Hana's Helpline. (R)</p>	<p>BBC Three 7.00 Great TV Mistakes 7.30 Doctor Who 8.20 Top Gear: Burma Special 9.20 Film: Lara Croft: Tomb Raider (2001) 10.55 Family Guy BBC Four 7.00 Great Barrier Reef 8.00 Shipwrecks: Britain's Sunken History 9.00 Salamander 10.30 Motown at the BBC 11.30 Smokey Robinson Live in Hyde Park ITV2 2.40 Film: Flipper (1996) 4.40 Britain's Got More Talent: Funniest Moments Ever! LOL Moments 5.40 Film: Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed (2004) 7.35 Film: Batman & Robin (1997) 10.00 Celebrity Juice 10.50 Crazy Beaches 11.20 Film: 40 Days and 40 Nights (2002) ITV3 3.50 Agatha Christie's Poirot 4.55 Inspector Morse 7.00 Remasters: Thyme 8.00 Doc Martin 9.00 Endeavour 11.00 A Touch of Frost ITV4 3.45 Film: The War Wagon (1967) 5.50 Film: Field of Dreams (1989) 8.00 Hornblower: Naval drama, starring Ion Gruffudd. 10.00 Film: The Day of the Jackal (1973) E4 4.00 Rude (ish) Tube 5.00 2 Broke Girls 6.00 The Big Bang Theory 7.00 How I Met Your Mother 8.00 The Tomorrow People 9.00 Film: Aliens (1986) Film4 2.55 Dear John (2010) 5.00 Chalet Girl (2011) 7.00 (500) Days of Summer (2009) 9.00 Easy A (2010) A teenage girl lies about her non-existent sexual history, and uses the resulting rumours to become the talk of the school. Teen comedy, with Emma Stone and Penn Badgley. 10.50 Silent House (2011)</p>

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What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 16.03.14

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE



Dermot O'Leary

Live from Space: Lap of the Planet

Channel 4, 7.30pm
Forget Around the World in 80 Days – this pioneering programme aims to take us around the globe in just 90 minutes. That's because a lot of it is coming live from the International Space Station, which over the course of the two-hour broadcast will be orbiting 250 miles above the Earth at speeds of up to 17,500 miles-per-hour. And when they're not sharing their incredible views of our planet, two of the ISS's English-speaking astronauts, Rick Mastracchio and Koichi Wakata will be interacting with the Earth-bound public.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.25** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Formula 1 – Australian Grand Prix Highlights. **4.00** Deadly 60 on a Mission: Pole to Pole. **4.35** Lifeline. **4.45** Regional Programme. **5.15** Songs of Praise. **5.50** BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

6.15 Blandings. Connie tries to impress Colonel Fanshawe in the hope that Clarence might succeed him as Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire. But her chances look slim when Beach starts acting oddly.

6.45 Countryfile. Reports from Somerset, hearing how a silage food bank has been set up to help animals evacuated in the floods and a visit to a factory using horse hair to make textiles. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

7.45 The Voice UK. The line-up for the live shows is revealed as Kylie Minogue, Tom Jones, Will.i.am and Ricky Wilson settle on the three acts they are each taking through to the quarter-finals.

9.00 The Musketeers. The King calls a contest to settle the rivalry between the Musketeers and Red Guards, giving d'Artagnan a chance to prove himself – but he must learn to control his temper.

10.00 BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Match of the Day 2.

11.25 Film: *Minority Report*. (2002) Sci-fi thriller, starring Tom Cruise.

1.45 Weatherview. **1.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Film: *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1945) **7.30** Monty Don's Italian Gardens. (R) **8.30** Countryfile. (R) **9.25** Gardeners' World. (R) **9.55** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.25** James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) **12.10** Michel Roux's Service. (R) **1.10** Michel Roux's Service. (R) **2.10** Film: *Rear Window*. (1954) **4.00** Flog It! Trade Secrets. **4.30** Collectaolics. (R) **5.30** The End of the Pier Show.

6.00 The Hairy Bikers: *Restoration Road Trip*. Si King and Dave Myers meet enthusiasts restoring machinery from the Industrial Revolution, beginning with a visit to Pleasley Colliery in Derbyshire. (R)

7.00 Wild Burma: *Nature's Lost Kingdom*. Gordon Buchanan and Justine Evans go in search of the sun bear, the Asian golden cat and the clouded leopard, and undercover filming in a border town leads to a shocking discovery. (R)

8.00 Top Gear: *Burma Special*. Part two of two. The three presenters venture into a state riven by civil war. Last in the series.

9.00 Fast and Fearless: *Britain's Bangor Racers*. Part two of two. Former champions come out of retirement for a memorial race.

10.00 *Mock the Week Looks Back at Britain*. Another themed selection from the show's archives. (R)

10.35 Line of Duty. (R)

11.35 Film: *The Shooting Party*. (1985) Period drama.

1.10 Sign Zone: *Countryfile*. (R)

2.05 Holby City. (R) **3.05** Silk. (R)

4.05 This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: *Dino Dan*. **6.10** Dino Dan. (R) **6.25** Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) **6.45** Canimals. (R) **6.55** Canimals. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.15** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.20** Sooty. (R) **7.30** Scrambled. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **11.20** TV News: Weather. **11.30** River Monsters. (R) **12.30** The Crocodile Hunter Diaries. (R) **1.35** All Star Family Fortunes. (R) **2.20** Agatha Christie's Marple. (R) **4.15** Film: *The Man with the Golden Gun*. (1974)

6.35 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News: Weather.

7.00 Catchphrase. New series. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show in which three contestants guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues, before one of them plays to win £50,000.

8.00 Harry's South Pole Heroes. Part one of two. Prince Harry joins four injured British soldiers on a 125-mile expedition in the Antarctic as part of the Walking with the Wounded South Pole Allied Challenge 2013.

9.00 Mr Selfridge. Harry asks Delphine to organise a special event in store.

10.00 ITV News at Ten: Weather.

10.15 You Saw Them Here First. More TV debuts by some of Britain's best-known faces. (R)

11.15 Anglo-Welsh Cup Rugby Union. Action from the final.

12.15 The Store. **2.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

10.30 Sunday Brunch. **1.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.50** The Simpsons. (R) **2.20** The Simpsons. (R) **2.50** Deal or No Deal. **3.45** Paralympic Winter Games: Closing Ceremony. The Games conclude in spectacular style at the Olympic Stadium in Sochi. **5.55** Channel 4 News.

6.30 The Floods That Foiled New Year: *Caught on Camera*. Documentary looking at the flooding that caused misery for thousands of homeowners across the nation throughout winter, featuring eyewitness testimony and expert commentary. (R)

7.30 Live from Space: *Lap of the Planet*. Astronauts on board the International Space Station complete a live 90-minute orbit of Earth, while Dermot O'Leary is with the team providing support in Houston. Last in the series.

10.05 Film: *Terminator Salvation*. (2009) In the future, resistance fighter John Connor leads a war against the deadly robots that have taken over the world. Sci-fi thriller sequel, with Christian Bale and Sam Worthington.

12.15 Film: *Memento*. (2000) A man searches for his wife's killer in spite of the short-term memory loss he sustained during the same attack. Christopher Nolan's thriller, with Guy Pearce and Carrie-Anne Moss. **2.10** The Good Wife. Alicia represents a teenage pop star. (R)

2.55 One Born Every Minute. A couple await the arrival of their fifth son. (R) **3.45** Location, Location, Location. Two families who have relocated to Aberdeen for work. (R)

4.40 Deal or No Deal. (R) **5.35** Freesports on 4.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: *Peppa Pig*. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fill and the Flowerpots. (R) **6.25** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.35** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.50** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.00** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.20** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** City of Friends. (R) **7.45** Milkshake! Pop Box. (R) **7.50** Little Princess. (R)

8.00 The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.15** Mo Mao. (R) **8.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.35** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **8.40** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Jelly Jam. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **10.00** Power Rangers Super Samurai. (R) **10.35** Power Rangers Megaforce. (R) **11.05** Chinese Food in Minutes. **11.25** Film: *Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son*. (2011) **1.30** Film: *Dr Dolittle 3*. (2006) **3.20** Film: *Arthur and the Invisibles*. (2006) **5.05** Film: *The Haunted Mansion*. (2003)

6.45 5 News Weekend.

6.50 Film: *Heilboy II: The Golden Army*. (2008) The demon hero battles a renegade elf prince, who plans to reawaken an unstoppable robot army and destroy mankind. Action fantasy sequel, starring Ron Perlman and Selma Blair.

9.00 Film: *Killer Elite*. (2011) Premiere. A former secret agent takes on one last mission to save his mentor, but assassins are sent to stop him. Action thriller, with Jason Statham.

11.15 Film: *On Deadly Ground*. (1994) Ecological thriller.

1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Dangerous Drivers' School. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.20** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.10** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm.

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes 2: The Sequel **7.20** Film: *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) **8.00** Russell Howard's Good News **10.00** Family Guy **10.45** Bluestone 42 **11.15** American Dad!

BBC Four
7.00 The Golden Age of Steam Railways **8.00** Oh Do Shut Up Dear! Mary Beard on the Public Voice of Women **9.00** Timewatch: QE2 – The Final Voyage **10.00** Film: *Coco Chanel & Igor Stravinsky* (2009) **11.50** Britain on Film: Dedicated Followers of Fashion

ITV2
3.55 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **5.20** Film: *About a Boy* (2002) **7.15** Film: *Mr Bean's Holiday* (2007) **9.00** Educating Joey Essex **10.00** The Only Way Is Essex **10.50** Party Wreck Around the World **11.50** The Big Reunion 2014

ITV3
7.00 The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes **4.50** Inspector Morse **7.00** Agatha Christie's Poirot **9.00** It'll Be Alright on the Night's Best of the Worst **10.00** Lewis

ITV4
3.00 Film: *The War Wagon* (1967) **5.05** Film: *Destry Rides Again* (1939) **7.00** Storage Wars **8.00** Anglo-Welsh Cup Rugby Union **9.00** Film: *The Interpreter* (2004)

E4
3.30 The Big Bang Theory **4.00** The Tomorrow People **5.00** Troy **6.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: *Mission: Impossible* (1996) **10.15** Rude Tube: Rude Tubes

Film4
2.50 Carry On Dick (1974) **4.40** The Wedding Planner (2001) **6.45** Mad Money (2008) **9.00** Conviction (2010) Fact-based drama. **11.05** Sexy Beast (2000)

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Film Choices

MONDAY

Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby, Channel 5, 11pm

A Nascar racing champion has everything he could want – until an arrogant French rival seizes the title from him, and his wife runs off with his best friend. Forced to move back in with his parents, the downhearted driver faces a battle to rebuild his shattered self-confidence and return to the track. Comedy, starring Will Ferrell, John C. Reilly and Sacha Baron Cohen. (2006)

TUESDAY

Cries in the Dark, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A cop investigates her pregnant sister's murder, and discovers her baby was delivered but is being held captive by the killer. Thriller, starring Eva La Rue and Adam Harrington. (2006)

WEDNESDAY

Brokeback Mountain, Channel 4, 12.05am

A doomed love affair between two Wyoming cowboys develops over the course of 20 years. The relationship begins when they are hired to herd sheep on a remote mountain in the 1960s, and though they go their separate ways and try to settle down to married life, they are unable to overcome their desire for each other and continue to meet in secret. Ang Lee's drama, starring Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal. (2005)



Revolutionary Road, Friday, BBC2, 11.10pm

THURSDAY

Sea Devils, Channel 4, 12.50pm

A smuggler in 19th-century Cornwall sneaks a woman into France, only to discover he has accidentally helped a spy flee the country. However, he later realises she is actually a double agent plotting to foil Napoleon's invasion of England. Swashbuckling adventure, starring Rock Hudson and Yvonne de Carlo. (1953)

FRIDAY

Duplicity, ITV, 10.35pm

A former CIA agent and an ex-MI6 officer find their romantic past catching up with them as they go head to head working in counter-intelligence for multinational corporations. As they try to outmanoeuvre each other to gain information about a lucrative product, they have difficulty maintaining a professional focus amid the sexual tension. Thriller, starring Julia Roberts. (2009)

Revolutionary Road, BBC2, 11.10pm

Frank and April Wheeler live a picture-perfect life on the surface, but in truth are growing frustrated with their lot and feel stifled by their situation. When April suggests the family moves to France to start a new life, Frank is persuaded it is a good idea, though when he is offered a stable job with a lucrative pay packet he changes his mind. 1950s-set drama, starring Kate Winslet. (2008)

Pick of the Week

Dermot's new project is out of this world

Dermot O'Leary is no stranger to the pressures of live TV – after all, he's the man who has had to get Louis Walsh to make his mind up about who he's sending home on The X Factor.

But now he's about to take on an even bigger challenge, as he helms a ground-breaking broadcast from the International Space Station.

The presenter won't actually be going into orbit himself, but he's thrilled just to be our man at Mission Control in Houston.

Dermot says: "This is such a mega and amazing programme to be part of, I am so looking forward to presenting it and I cannot wait.

"Going live with a TV show is always great, but to be able to say 'now we are going live to the Space Station' will be a fantastic and surreal experience."

It's going to be fairly mind-blowing for viewers as well, as the programme aims to take us around the world in 90 minutes – over the course of the broadcast, the space

station will be orbiting 250 miles above the Earth at speeds of up to 17,500 miles-per-hour.

And when they're not sharing their incredible views of our planet, two of the ISS's English-speaking astronauts, Rick Mastracchio and Koichi Wakata, will be interacting with the Earth-bound public.

No doubt Dermot will have a few questions for them as well. "For me, the point of going into television is I am always interested in people – whether it is an astronaut or a cab driver. I love getting stories and it is why I do the job I do.

"My fascination for this programme is two-fold. Aside from the live link-up and how brilliant that will be, there is that macabre thing where you wonder what you would do if something goes wrong. How do they deal with it? What do they do? Then there are the ordinary, daily things like how do they shave? How do they go about their day-to-day lives? Everything about it all fascinates me."

Although Dermot admits he's not an expert on space exploration, he does have a few boffins on hand.

He'll be joined in Houston by Mike Massimino, one of the astronauts who helped repair and upgrade the Hubble Telescope, but who might be best known to regular Channel 4 watchers for his cameo appearances on The Big Bang Theory, and there are also contributions from Stephen Hawking and British astronaut Tim Peake.

So after doing all the research and preparation for the show, and rubbing shoulders with the experts, is there a part of Dermot that wishes he was broadcasting from the Space Station itself?

He says: "You don't realise that when you talk about what it would be like to be an astronaut. The level of sacrifice they have to make is extraordinary and they have to be so fit and intelligent. They do have a certain purpose up there and the science that goes into it all really fascinates me – but no, I don't want to be an astronaut!"



Live from Space: Lap of the Planet, Sunday, Channel 4, 7.30pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY

The Underdog, ITV, 9pm

The League of Gentlemen, Psychoville and the recent Inside No 9 all proved that Reece Shearsmith likes his comedy on the creepy side. But he's set to be even more unsettling in this new three-part drama, not least because it's inspired by a true story. Shearsmith stars as Malcolm Webster, whose new wife Claire (Sheridan Smith) is concerned by his mounting debts – but rather than sort out his finances, he instead tries to get her under control by systematically plying her with drugs, and then resorts staging a car accident, which claims her life. After collecting the life insurance cheque for £200,000, Malcolm moves to New Zealand and starts a new life, but old patterns start to repeat themselves...

The Plantagenets, BBC2, 9pm

They may not have got their own sexy mini-series like the Tudors, but the Plantagenets can take some comfort in the fact that no other dynasty managed to reign over England for so long. From Henry II's accession to the throne in 1154 until Richard III's death in 1485, they ruled the land – and now Professor Robert Bartlett is telling the Plantagenet story. He begins, fittingly enough, with Henry II, looking at how he created an empire that took in much of France as well as England. But his legacy was threatened by his warring sons Richard and John, who at one point looked set to destroy the royal house.

TUESDAY

Shetland, BBC1, 9pm

Perez and his team work against the clock to catch the killer of Catherine, a young girl found dead on a beach. He is in a dream-like state of shock when seven-year-old Catriona Bruce's body is discovered on a hill clutching a doll. The law enforcer thinks it's the same doll he sees in a photo at Magnus Bain's house, so the recluse is taken in for questioning while a mob expresses its anger. Though he tries to get answers, Perez just gets a whining from the suspect, and just before he's locked in a prison cell, Magnus lashes out. Douglas Henshall, Sophia Carr-Gomm and Brian Cox head the cast.

Undercover Doctor: Cure Me, I'm Gay, Channel 4, 10pm

Dr Christian Jessen is most famous for going about his medical business on Channel 4 favourites Embarrassing Bodies and Supersize vs Superskinny, and until now his homosexuality has never been relevant to his media work. However, this one-off documentary investigates matters close to his heart, namely attitudes towards gay people, and sees Christian going undercover to investigate – and undertake – controversial gay 'cures', both here and over in America. The doc is shocked to discover that there are some

people who believe homosexuality to be a disorder that needs curing, so he's eager to prove or disprove their claims by offering himself up for the treatment.

WEDNESDAY

W1A, BBC2, 10pm

When you have a sitcom as successful and critically acclaimed as Twenty Twelve, it seems only natural to carry on the saga, even if the event the key characters are plugging – the London Olympics – has come and gone. So the good news is Hugh Bonneville and Jessica Hynes are back for this new BBC-centric saga, and they are joined by Sarah Parish. In the first offering, accusations of anti-Cornish bias are levelled at the BBC, so Ian calls in Siobhan, of PR company Perfect Curve, to advise him.

Meanwhile, producer Lucy Freeman chairs a meeting about pending show Britain's Tastiest Village – a mash-up of Britain's Got Talent, Countryfile and The One Show.

THURSDAY

Turks & Caicos, BBC2, 9pm

Typical, you wait three years for a sequel to the terrific BBC film

Page Eight, and then two come along at once. Starring Bill Nighy as MI5 spy Johnny Worricker, Page Eight was shown to great acclaim in 2011, and now Turks and Caicos picks up where that left off. We find former analyst Worricker hiding out from MI5 in the West Indies, where an encounter with a CIA agent forces him into the company of some dubious American businessmen. As he learns more about the extent of their nefarious schemes, he ends up having to fight for his own survival as he uncovers links to the British prime minister. Christopher Walken, Helena Bonham Carter, Winona Ryder and Ralph Fiennes co-star.

FRIDAY

Sport Relief 2014, BBC1, 7pm

The brains behind this charity extravaganza have pulled off a coup that could turn Comic Relief's Red Nose green with envy – it boasts the return of Only Fools and Horses after a 10-year absence from our screens. Del Boy (David Jason) and Rodney (Nicholas Lyndhurst) are reuniting for a one-off sketch, but if you're wondering where exactly the sport comes in, they are joined by a special guest star – that's right, David Beckham is heading to Peckham. The rest of the evening's broadcast comes live from Queen Elizabeth Park, with Gary Lineker, David Williams, Claudia Winkleman, Jack Whitehall, Fearnie Cotton and Davina McCall (who has hopefully got her breath back after her strenuous fund-raising efforts last month) on presenting duties.



Sport Relief 2014, Friday, BBC1, 7pm

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Family home with stunning views towards golf course



A FOUR-BEDROOMED detached home in Hartsbourne Drive, Halesowen, has stunning views over Leasowes Park towards Halesowen Golf Club. It is for sale through Taylors estate agent at £349,950.

Standing at the head of a cul-de-sac it also has a rear garden and landscaped front garden with a double-width driveway.

Accommodation comprises a double-glazed porch, entrance hall, cloakroom with a WC, a well-proportioned lounge with feature fireplace in a stone surround, a delightful and spacious double-glazed conservatory with underfloor heating, carpeting and garden views, dining room, spacious kitchen with units and contrasting work surfaces, an integral oven, hob, fridge and two dishwashers and French doors to rear garden. There is a utility, four double bedrooms, (one with en suite), a house bathroom with a corner bath, double garage with electric doors.

Contact Taylors' Halesowen branch on 0121 550 3978 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk



Three-storey barn conversion in village

A RARE example of a three-storey period barn conversion in an enviable village location is on sale with estate agent Peter James.

The property at The Courtyard, Back Lane, Ackleton, has a lounge, fabulous beamed dining room, kitchen, separate utility, four bedrooms and two bath/shower rooms with brand new suites. There is a large garden, oil-fired central heating, garage and parking for two cars. There is an 130ft south-facing rear garden. The barn conversion has timber double-glazed windows and exposed rafters. On the market for £325,000, this home is part of an exclusive development of barns belonging to Ackleton Manor. Call 01902 754777.



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ROSS, ROWLEY REGIS



MODERN 5 DOUBLE BED DETACHED home with DOUBLE GARAGE & driveway. 21ft lounge, separate dining room/study & 16ft fitted dining kitchen. D/S WC & utility room. Master bedroom with DRESSING AREA & en-suite shower room. 4 further bedrooms & 2 further bathrooms. UPVC DG & GCH fitted. Lawn rear garden with westerly aspect. EPC rating: C Ref: D1390
£299,950 Ref: D1390

GOODWYN AVENUE, OLDBURY



EXTENDED home in CUL-DE-SAC location & having LARGE lawn rear garden. 21ft lounge, separate dining room & CONSERVATORY. Fitted kitchen & D/S shower room/utility. REFITTED family bathroom & 3 LARGE bedrooms on 1st floor. 2 FURTHER bedrooms on 2nd floor. GARAGE & driveway to front. UPVC DG & GCH fitted. EPC rating: D Ref: D1358
£235,000 Ref: D1358

CULMORE ROAD, HALESOWEN



IMMACULATE & EXTENDED double fronted home in tree lined road. 16ft lounge & 10ft dining area leading to REFITTED kitchen. Separate utility room, d/s WC & STUDY/playroom. REFITTED bathroom & 3 bedrooms. Garage & gated driveway to the front. Lawn rear garden. UPVC DG & gas central heating. EPC rating: E Ref: D1416
£214,950 Ref: D1416

NARROW LANE, HALESOWEN



EXTENDED & well presented DETACHED home with driveway & GARAGE. 14ft lounge & 10ft kitchen diner. ALSO a 2nd lounge & study. Having UPVC conservatory, utility room & d/s WC. REFITTED family bathroom & 3 bedrooms. UPVC DG & gas central heating. Lawn rear garden with patio area. EPC rating: D Ref: D1400
£199,950 Ref: D1400

TREVANIE AVENUE, QUINTON



EXTENDED home in popular tree lined cul-de-sac. EXTENDED LOUNGE & KITCHEN. Dining room. UTILITY & DW. 3rd reception currently used as BEDROOM 4. 3 principal bedrooms & bathroom on 1st floor. block paved driveway. rear garden with SOUTHERLY ASPECT. Majority Upvc dng & gas ch.VERSATILE ACCOMMODATION - POTENTIAL FOR D/S SHOWER ROOM & ANNEXE. EPC Rating: E - Ref: D1411
£199,950 Ref: D1411

DEVON ROAD, BEARWOOD



Terraced home BENEFITTING FROM IMPROVEMENTS with PARKING to front & gardens to rear. 3 LARGE bedrooms & bathroom on 1st floor. 26ft lounge diner and 15ft9 fitted kitchen. UPVC double glazing & gas central heating. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC ratings: D - Ref: D1260
£164,950 Ref: D1260

BISSELL STREET, QUINTON



NO UPWARD CHAIN - Superbly presented & SPACIOUS semi with CHARACTER FEATURES, two reception rooms. Kitchen & delightful d/s bathroom. 3 double bedrooms on 1st floor. Large loft room (ideal for conversion - subject to planning). Charming cottage style garden to rear. UPVC DG & GCH. INTERNAL INSPECTION ESSENTIAL - EPC rating: E Ref: D1344
£149,995 Ref: D1344

WEDGEWOOD ROAD, QUINTON



NO UPWARD CHAIN - WELL PRESENTED semi-detached home with gravelled frontage. LARGE 20ft kitchen diner to rear & lounge to front. 3 GOOD SIZE bedrooms & bathroom with white suite on 1st floor. BIG lawn rear garden. Majority UPVC DG & gas central heating fitted. EPC rating: Ref: D1393
£124,950 Ref: D1393

WOLVERHAMPTON ROAD, OLDBURY



IN NEED OF MODERNISATION - Traditional semi-detached home with GARAGE to rear. NO UPWARD CHAIN. 2 reception rooms & kitchen. Side veranda & downstairs WC. 3 bedrooms & family bathroom. EPC rating: E Ref: D1412
£119,950 Ref: D1412

ARTHUR HARRIS CL, SMETHWICK



IMMACULATE & spacious terraced home found in end of CUL-DE-SAC position. 14ft lounge diner & 10ft kitchen. REFITTED bathroom & 2 LARGE bedrooms. ALLOCATED parking to front. Lawn garden to rear. UPVC DG & gas central heating fitted. EPC rating: C Ref: D1417
£109,950 Ref: D1417

SOMMERFIELD RD, BARTLEY GRN



Terraced home with DRIVEWAY/PARKING to the front. 16ft lounge to rear & spacious kitchen diner to front. 3 bedrooms & family bathroom on 1st floor. Gas central heating & UPVC double glazing fitted. EPC rating: C Ref: D1418
£99,950 Ref: D1418

LARKSPUR COURT, HALESOWEN



Modern RETIREMENT apartment on the 2nd floor with LIFT ACCESS. 13ft lounge & 10ft kitchen. 2 DOUBLE bedrooms (1 could be used as a dining room) & bathroom. UPVC double glazing & gas central heating fitted. Car park to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC rating: C Ref: D1361
£99,950 Ref: D1361

SIMMONS DRIVE, QUINTON



LARGE terraced home with DRIVEWAY to front. 16ft lounge to rear & 15ft kitchen diner to front. Benefits from a downstairs WC. 2 DOUBLE bedrooms & REFITTED shower room. UPVC double glazing & warm air central heating. Rear garden having SOUTHERLY aspect. EPC rating: D Ref: D1410
£94,950 Ref: D1410

VALENTINE ROAD, OLDBURY



IN NEED OF REFURBISHMENT - Spacious terraced home with DRIVEWAY to front & NO UPWARD CHAIN. Kitchen diner, lounge & CONSERVATORY. 3 bedrooms & family bathroom. EPC rating: Ref: D1414
£89,950 Ref: D1414

SUNNYBANK ROAD, OLDBURY



LARGE 1st floor maisonette with NO UPWARD CHAIN in a CUL-DE-SAC location. 2 DOUBLE bedrooms & REFITTED shower room. 14ft lounge diner & 11ft8 kitchen. Communal gardens & parking. NO SERVICE CHARGES. UPVC DG & night storage heating. Only 49 years left on lease. EPC rating: F Ref: D1375
£74,950 Ref: D1375

UPPER CLOSE, BARTLEY GREEN



WELL PRESENTED 1st floor apartment with GARDEN TO REAR overlooking Woodgate Country Park. Having over 100 years left on lease. REFITTED kitchen area & 21ft lounge area. REFITTED bathroom & large double bedroom. DOUBLE GLAZING & warm air central heating fitted. EPC rating: E Ref: D1413
£69,950 Ref: D1413

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BRIERLEY HILL, Stockwell Avenue £625 pcm - Fees
Early viewing is essential for this 3 bedroom semi-detached home in a popular location with accommodation comprising: entrance hall, lounge, dining room, new fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, re-fitted bathroom, off road parking and front and rear gardens. EPC: D



NEW
BARTLEY GREEN, Hunnington Close £600 pcm - Fees
Modern 3 bedroom mid-terrace house in quiet cul-de-sac, close to shops and transport. Large lounge with feature fireplace, fully fitted kitchen with appliances, private rear mature garden, 2 doubles and 1 single bedroom, white bathroom with 'P' bath and shower. Garage en bloc. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Middlefield Gardens £595 pcm - Fees
First floor apartment in Hurst Green. Set within well maintained gardens, this apartment features a large lounge, 2 double and 1 single bedroom, fitted kitchen with appliances, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, parking area and communal gardens. Available now. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Holt Road £595 pcm - Fees
A nicely presented refurbished end terrace house, close to local shops. Featuring 3 bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with white goods, bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, front and rear gardens, driveway and garage, unfurnished. EPC: E



NEW
HALESOWEN, Brett Young Close £570 pcm - Fees
An impressive 1st floor apartment within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre. Comprising 2 double bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite, spacious lounge with a leather sofa, contemporary kitchen, house bathroom with shower, allocated parking. Well worth viewing. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Cavalier Drive £550 pcm - Fees
This beautifully presented and well looked after furnished 1st floor apartment is centrally located to Halesowen, within easy reach of the town centre and local bus station featuring 2 bedrooms, large lounge with access to your own balcony, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, electric heating, double glazing, allocated parking space for one car. A must see property. EPC: C



OLDSWINFORD, Hall Street £550 pcm - Fees
A quiet mid-terrace house, close to local shops and transport links, comprising of 1 double bedroom, 1 single bedroom, fitted kitchen with white goods, downstairs bathroom with shower, spacious lounge, small rear garden, double glazing, gas central heating, on road parking. EPC: D



NETHERTON, Purlin Wharf £550 pcm - Fees
A very presentable, unfurnished 1st floor apartment on this popular development, overlooking the canal. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with fridge freezer, master bedroom with en-suite, family bathroom with hair wash shower only, double glazing, electric heating, 1 allocated parking space. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Malt Mill Lane £530 pcm - Fees
A superb fully re-furnished traditional terraced house. Within easy reach of Blackheath and a short drive from Halesowen and the M5. This home features 2 large reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom with shower, 2 double bedrooms, gas central heating, double glazing. A must see property! EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Beaumont Road £525 pcm - Fees
2 MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! Ideally located in Blackheath for local amenities, train station and the M5. This large 2 double bedroom end terrace house features 2 reception rooms with 1 reception living suite flooring and a working wood burner, fitted kitchen, utility room with washing machine, 2 double bedrooms, upstairs bathroom, courtyard rear garden, on road parking and off road parking available for 1 car plus garage (accessed from Clifton Road). EPC: TBC



QUINTON, Lapal Manor Court £525 pcm - Fees
An unfurnished ground floor apartment briefly comprising: living room/fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower. Benefits include gas central heating, secure allocated parking. Ideal location for motorway access. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Peckingham Street £525 pcm - Fees
Wonderfully refurbished with original features maintained and fantastic convenience centre of town. Ring us now to view this lovely light, airy apartment, modern kitchen with new appliances and useful utility room. With 2 double bedrooms, this is a must see exceptional apartment. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Coppice Road £485 pcm - Fees
A 2 bedroom semi-detached house recently fully refurbished on the Timberlee Estate. This house comprises of a front reception room, spacious rear lounge, fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, front and rear gardens, on road parking. EPC: C



NEW
TIPTON, Anchor Drive £475 pcm - Fees
Modern and comfortable living. A 3rd floor apartment within easy access to Dudley, Tipton and the M5. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, modern kitchen, white bathroom suite with shower, spacious lounge with patio doors opening to a Juliet balcony, electric heating, double glazing, garage. EPC: C



NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, Mill Road £475 pcm - Fees
Located on this very popular Timberlee Estate and ideally situated for local schools and transport links. Comprising 1 double and 2 single bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, modern kitchen, house bathroom with shower, tiered rear garden. On road parking. EPC: D



OLDBURY, Arden Grove £475 pcm - Fees
1st floor modern apartment occupying the whole of the top floor. Within walking distance of Langley High St, train/bus links and J2 of the M5. This immaculate property features a spacious lounge, recently refitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, 1 double bedroom. Private garden and driveway parking. EPC: C



NEW
BRIERLEY HILL, Norwood Road £450 pcm - Fees
An unfurnished end terrace house, close to local shops and not far from Merry Hill Shopping Centre. This large house features a lovely living room, fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom with shower, 2 double bedrooms, gas central heating, double glazing, rear garden, on road parking. Additional fees will apply. EPC: E



LYE, High Street £400 pcm - Fees
Fully refurbished in the centre of Lye. This large and spacious 1st floor apartment has a lovely lounge with a feature bay window, 2 good size bedrooms, new bathroom suite but no shower, modern and contemporary kitchen with oven and hob, electric heating, double glazing, on road parking. EPC: F



HALESOWEN, Apperley Way £395 pcm - Fees
Available is this unfurnished 1st floor apartment which is well presented throughout, within walking distance to Cradley Heath train station, featuring a modern fitted kitchen, light and airy lounge, bathroom with shower, 1 bedroom with built in wardrobes, communal drying area. EPC: C



NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, Trinity Street £375 pcm - Fees
House share in a large Victorian semi-detached home. Large furnished double bedroom available in this lovely period house. Kitchen, bathroom and large lounge are all shared facilities. Wi-Fi broadband. Rent to include all bills. 2 people sharing will be £100 pcm extra. Available mid-March. EPC: E



NEW
DUDLEY, Austin House £375 pcm - Fees
Modern re-furnished ground floor flat available, communal entrance, open plan lounge with kitchen, double bedroom and shower room. Electric storage heaters, newly fitted carpet, property alarmed, allocated parking, security light. EPC: D

↑Property

Character home with views of the Arboretum



A SIX-BEDROOMED traditional character home in Victoria Terrace, Walsall, has impressive accommodation, original features and views over The Arboretum.

It is for sale via Bairstow Eves at offers over £340,000. No chain. It includes entrance hallway, reception room one with feature fireplace and bay window, two further reception rooms. There is also a shower room, breakfast kitchen/office/playroom and a cellar. On the first floor is a master bedroom with bathroom, four further bedrooms and staircase to bedroom six. Contact Barstow Eves on 01922 430925, visit www.bairstoweves.co.uk



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- Terraced Four Bedroom Town House
- Two Spacious Reception Rooms
- Close Proximity Of Birmingham City Centre
- EPC Rating C

£165,000

Pennycricket Lane Oldbury



- Newly Refurbished Two Bed Terrace Home
- Newly Fitted Kitchen With Built In Appliances
- Two Spacious Reception Rooms
- EPC Rating C

£65,000

Greenwood Avenue Oldbury



- Three Bedroom Semi Detached
- Driveway to fit up to two cars
- New modern kitchen
- EPC Rating D

£107,950

Wiltshire Way West Bromwich



- Three Bedroom Semi Detached
- Living Room & Dining Area
- Front Driveway & Rear Garden
- EPC Rating D

£107,950

Navigation Way Hockley



- Three Bedroom Semi Detached Townhouse
- Ground Floor Kitchen and Diner
- Garage and Driveway
- EPC Rating D

£170,000

Abbey Road Warley Woods



- Fantastic Three Bedroom Semi Detached
- Modern Kitchen
- Featured Original Brick Fire Place
- EPC Rating D

£169,950

Rachael Gardens Park Hill



- Three Bedroom Semi Detached
- Extended Reception Room
- Garage and Driveway
- EPC Rating D

£159,950

Warwick Gardens Tividale



- Three Bedroom Semi Detached Home
- Corner Plot Located in Cul De Sac
- Impressive Open Plan Kitchen
- EPC Rating TBC

£125,000

Slade Road Halesowen



- Three Bedroom Terraced Residence
- Extremely Spacious Living Quarters
- Extended Kitchen and Breakfast Bar
- EPC Rating: D

£124,950

Stone Street Oldbury



- Top Floor Two Bedroom Apartment
- Very Well Presented
- Master Bedroom with En-suite
- EPC Rating: C

£119,950

Ashwin Road Handsworth



- Mid Terraced Three Bedroom House
- Two Reception Rooms
- Downstairs Bathroom
- EPC Rating - TBC

£99,950

Dagger Lane West Bromwich



- Four Bedroom Semi-Detached Home
- Two Lovely Reception Rooms
- Extended Fully Equipped Kitchen
- EPC Rating D

£249,950

Thorncroft Way Walsall



- Impressive Detached Four Bedroom Home
- Well Appointed Ground Floor Living Areas
- Garage and Driveway
- EPC Rating C

£220,000

Dudley Road East Tividale



- New Build Detached Four Bedroom
- Well Maintained Rear Garden
- Two Good-sized Reception Rooms
- EPC Rating C

£169,950

Landswood Road Oldbury



- Three Bedroom Semi Detached Residence
- Well Appointed Ground Floor Living Areas
- Conservatory And Garage To Rear
- EPC Rating D

£149,500

Hintlesham Avenue Harborne



- Detached Four Bedroom Residence
- Impressive Space
- Four Double Bedrooms
- EPC Rating C

£1695 + Fees Apply

Birchwoods Bartley Green



- Beautiful Three Bedroom Detached House
- Private Driveway
- Garage To Side of House
- EPC Rating D

£700 + Fees Apply

Terrace Street Wednesbury



- Three Bedroom semi-detached home
- Large extended modern kitchen
- Separate Shower and Jacuzzi
- Fabulous rear and front garden

£600 + fees apply

St Michaels Way Tipton



- Semi Detached Three Bedroom Property
- Driveway with Garage and front lawn
- Three good-sized bedrooms
- Spacious landscaped garden

£595 + Fees Apply

Addington Way Tividale



- Modern Build Three Bedroom House
- Modern Kitchen/Diner
- Landscaped Enclosed Rear Garden
- EPC Rating C

£560 + Fees Apply

Apollo Road Oldbury



- Two Bedroom Terraced Residence
- Extended To The Rear
- Elongated Rear Garden
- Two Reception Rooms

£500 + Fees Apply

Crownmeadow Drive Tipton



- Secluded Three Bedroom semi-detached
- Fully fitted kitchen
- Large Kitchen Area
- EPC Rating D

£475 + Fees Apply

Caversham Place Sutton Coldfield



- Beautiful Three Bedroom Town House
- Magnificent Fully Equipped Kitchen
- Situated Over Four Floors
- EPC Rating C

£1100 + Fees Apply

Sandwell Road Handsworth Wood



- Six Bedroom Town House
- Beautiful Maintained Rear Garden
- CCTV System
- EPC Rating C

£895 + Fees Apply

Well Street City Centre



- Brand New Two Bedroom Apartment
- Fully Furnished
- Attention to Detail Fixtures and Fittings
- Top Floor Apartment (Grd)

£850 + Fees Apply

Selwyn Road Edgbaston



- Three Bedroom Residence
- Dining and Living Room
- Garage and Driveway
- EPC Rating F

£795 + Fees Apply

Inverclyde Road Handsworth



- Attractive Four Bedroom Semi Detached
- Large Kitchen and Diner
- Large Rear Garden
- EPC Rating: E

£725 + Fees Apply

Tividale Street Tividale



- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached Home
- Spacious lounge with French Doors
- Fitted Modern kitchen
- EPC Rating C

£600 + Fees Apply

Princes Road Tividale



- Three Bedroom Semi Detached Residence
- Large Kitchen Area
- Three Double Bedrooms
- EPC Rating D

£550 + Fees Apply

Greenly Road Wolverhampton



- Two/Three Bedroom Bungalow
- Gas Central Heating
- UPVC Double Glazing
- Partly Furnished Property

£525 + Fees Apply

Greets Green Rd WBrom



- Three Bedroom Mid Terraced Residence
- Two Spacious Reception Rooms
- Elongated Rear Garden
- Neutrally Decorated Throughout

£475 + Fees Apply

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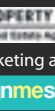
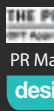
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Property

Detached house is in a cul-de-sac near to park



A LARGE four-bedroom detached home in Sefton Drive, Rowley Regis, is in an cul-de-sac close to Warrens Hall Country Park.

It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £285,000.

It has reception hall, large lounge, dining room, re-fitted kitchen with utility off, conservatory, study and downstairs cloakroom.

En suite

The first floor has four bedrooms (master with en suite) and a refitted shower room.

The property also has gardens, gas central heating, double glazing and a double garage.

The entrance hall has polished hardwood flooring.

Contact Hicks Hadley on 0121 585 6667 or visit www.hickshadley.com



Family home has four bedrooms

SET back from the road with a garage and driveway, this substantial four-bedroom family home in Dagger Lane, West Bromwich is situated within a very sought after residential area.

It provides impressive living space, a fully-equipped kitchen, extension, parking and a substantial south-facing garden.

With an asking price of £249,950, it comprises a reception room, secondary living room, separate WC, four bedrooms with one en suite, family bathroom and hallway. The rear garden is enclosed with a patio area, fish pond and lawn. There is a garage.

Call WLYP on 0121 544 9595.



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HALESOWEN, COCKSHED LANE,



A three bedroom detached property which benefits from double glazing and a gas fired central heating system. The accommodation briefly comprises enclosed porch, hallway, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, landing, three bedrooms and family bathroom. Externally the property has an extensive driveway, integral garage and rear garden. EPC ratings D. **£220,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

HALESOWEN, NEWBURY CLOSE,



We are pleased to offer a detached property which briefly comprises entrance hallway, shower/WC, lounge, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, conservatory, two bedrooms, two bedrooms (en suite shower room), WC to master bedroom and family bathroom/WC. Externally there are gardens to the front and rear, driveway and an integral garage. Double glazing, gas central heating system and no ground share. EPC rating is Grade C. **£249,950** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

QUINTON, SIMMONS DRIVE,



A well presented terraced property which benefits from a gas fired central heating system and double glazing. The accommodation briefly comprises, porch, hallway, cloakroom/WC, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, three bedrooms and a bathroom. Externally the property has a driveway and a rear garden. EPC rating is Grade C. **£125,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

WOODGATE, WOODGATE GARDENS,



A traditional three bedroom terraced property which has been refurbished. The property benefits from double glazing and the accommodation briefly comprises entrance porch, hallway, cloakroom/WC, lounge, kitchen/diner, landing, three bedrooms and bathroom. Externally the property has gardens to the front and rear. EPC rating is Grade D. **£99,950** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

OLDBURY, LINKS ROAD,



A traditional three bedroom semi detached which benefits from gas fired central heating system and double glazing. The accommodation briefly comprises hallway, shower room, fitted kitchen, lounge/dining room, veranda, cloakroom/WC, utility room, landing, three bedrooms and bathroom. Externally there are gardens to the front and rear, driveway and garage and large side plot. EPC rating is grade D. **£150,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

OLDBURY, MANOR ROAD,



YOUR MOVE are pleased to offer for sale this two bedroom detached bungalow which briefly comprises entrance hallway, lounge, kitchen, two bedrooms and bathroom. Externally there is a garden to the rear and a driveway. The property benefits from double glazing as stated and gas central heating system. EPC rating is grade C. **£125,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

OLDBURY, WESTMEAD DRIVE,



A modern semi detached property situated in this sought after cul-de-sac. The property benefits from double glazing and the accommodation briefly comprises lounge, spacious dining kitchen, three bedrooms and bathroom. Externally the property benefits a corner plot providing gardens to three sides, a driveway and a detached garage. Viewing is highly recommended. EPC rating is grade D. **£140,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

HALESOWEN, MAPLE ROAD,



A traditional mid terrace property which benefits from a gas fired central heating system. The accommodation briefly comprises lounge, dining room, kitchen, ground floor bathroom, landing, three first floor bedrooms and outside the property has a garden to the rear. EPC rating is Grade E. **£89,950** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

OLDBURY, OAK ROAD,



A traditional bay fronted link detached residence which benefits from a gas fired central heating system and double glazing. The accommodation comprises enclosed porch, hallway, two reception rooms, fitted kitchen, landing, three bedrooms and family bathroom. Outside there is a driveway, side garage and rear garden. EPC rating is grade C. **£199,950** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

OLDBURY, RAMSAY ROAD,



An imposing three bedroom semi detached property which benefits from gas fired central heating system and double glazing. The accommodation briefly comprises hallway, lounge, dining kitchen, cloakroom/WC, landing, three bedrooms and bathroom. Externally there are gardens, driveway and garage. EPC rating is Grade E. **£160,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

OLDBURY, ELIZABETH CRESCENT,



A well presented mid terrace house featuring double glazing and a gas fired central heating system. The accommodation comprises, lounge, dining room, kitchen, four bedrooms and bathroom. Outside the property has front and rear gardens. EPC rating is Grade D. **£125,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

OLDBURY, PINKNEY PLACE,



A traditional-style three bedroom semi detached property. The accommodation briefly comprises entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, conservatory, three bedrooms and bathroom. EPC rating is Grade E. **£120,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

OLDBURY, CASTLE ROAD WEST,



An extended semi detached property. The accommodation briefly comprises porch, hallway, shower room, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, landing, three bedrooms and bathroom. Externally there is a driveway and a rear garden. EPC ratings awaited. **£189,950** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

QUINTON, UPPER MEADOW ROAD,



An immaculate bay fronted semi detached house. Spacious accommodation throughout including a lounge, kitchen/diner, three bedrooms and shower room. Externally there is a block paved driveway, large rear garden and detached garage. EPC rating awaited. **£167,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

QUINTON, OX LEASOW,



A spacious three bedroom family home. The accommodation briefly comprises entrance hall, hallway, cloakroom/WC, kitchen/diner, lounge, landing, three bedrooms and family bathroom. Outside there is a driveway, garage and a rear garden. EPC rating is grade D. **£100,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

BARTLEY GREEN, PRIMROSE WOODS,



A modern detached property. The accommodation briefly comprises entrance hall, cloakroom/WC, lounge, fitted kitchen, conservatory, landing, three bedrooms and shower room. Outside the property has front and rear gardens, driveway and garage. EPC rating is grade C. **£190,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

OLDBURY, SUNNYBANK ROAD,



An immaculate three bedroom detached bungalow. The accommodation briefly comprises porch, hallway, lounge, conservatory, fitted kitchen, three bedrooms, en-suite shower room, family bathroom. EPC rating is Grade C. **£355,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

BARTLEY GREEN, GRAZEBROOK CROFT,



A three bedroom end of terrace property. The accommodation briefly comprises enclosed porch, hallway, lounge, kitchen/diner, landing, three bedrooms and bathroom. Outside the property has front and rear gardens. EPC rating is grade D. **£90,000** QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766

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Manson Drive, Cradley Heath



EPC C

£200,000

A four bedroom modern detached property comprising ground floor lounge, separate dining room, kitchen/diner, utility and WC. Halesowen.

Belbroughton Road, Halesowen



Awaiting EPC

Offers Over £180,000

This four bedroom town house situated on a well established residential estate comprises kitchen breakfast room, conservatory and lounge.

Glendale Close, Halesowen



EPC E

£140,000

This is a traditional semi detached house which has recently undergone a refurbishment program. The property offers three bedrooms and family bathroom.

Powke Lane, Rowley Regis



EPC C

Offers Over £140,000

This modern terraced house offers three bedrooms, bathroom, en-suite, lounge/diner, rear garden and garage.

Best Street, Cradley Heath



EPC E

£120,000

A four bedroom semi detached house comprising lounge/diner, kitchen, WC, drive/carport, front and rear gardens.

Green Lane, Halesowen



EPC D

£75,000

This traditional mid terraced property offers the following accommodation lounge, three bedrooms and rear garden. Halesowen.

Apperley Way, Halesowen



EPC E

£70,000

This ground floor, one bedroom flat offers lounge, kitchen/breakfast room, bathroom, communal gardens and allocated parking. Halesowen.

Aston Road, Tividale



new price

Awaiting EPC

Offers Over £100,000

Semi detached two bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, kitchen/diner, utility, bathroom, rear garden and driveway.

Hereford Road, Dudley



EPC E

Offers Over £90,000

Semi detached two bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, kitchen/diner, conservatory, downstairs WC, gardens and driveway.

Ivanhoe Street, Dudley



EPC D

Offers Over £80,000

Mid terraced three bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, dining room, kitchen, downstairs WC, upstairs bathroom and rear garden.

Nith Place, Dudley



EPC E

Offers Over £80,000

End terraced two bedroom property comprising entrance hall, lounge, kitchen/diner, downstairs WC, bathroom, front and rear garden and driveway.

Dudley Road, Dudley



EPC C

Offers Over £70,000

First floor two bedroom flat briefly comprising communal entrance, entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, bathroom, rear garden and communal parking.

Pleasant View, Dudley



Awaiting EPC

£60,000

First floor one bedroom flat offering entrance hallway, lounge, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom and communal gardens.

Kiers Bridge Close, Tipton



EPC D

£100,000

Mid terraced two bedroom property briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge, kitchen/diner, bathroom, rear garden and allocated parking.

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Drivetime

Popular Leon gets estate

By Graham Breeze

Why it's taken SEAT so long to introduce an estate version of the popular Leon range is anyone's guess.

But now they have and the company has done a great job, managing to keep the highly impressive hatchback's style and handling in place.

It's called a Sports Tourer – but it is an estate in my book – and the third bodystyle in the range, joining the five-door hatch and three-door Sport Coupe (SC).

The line-up is the same as the five-door too with S, SE and FR trim levels, and power coming from a selection of turbo-charged petrol and diesel engines. My pick is the SE 1.6TDI 105PS version with a starting price of £19,495, average fuel con-

sumption figures of an amazing 74.3mpg and CO2 emissions of only 99g/km.

Surprisingly you still get a top speed of 119mph from this model though getting to 62mph will take you over 11 seconds.

So SEAT haven't let anyone down with the performance side and certainly haven't with the additional space.

Boot space is particularly impressive and while the Leon is not top of the class it does command a medal place with an impressive moveable boot floor, easy folding rear seats and even a folding front passenger seat, just in case you need to carry the odd coffin.

The Leon shares the same chassis as Audi A3 and VW Golf, so solid handling is guaranteed, with a tight ride and responsive steering, though the ride is quite firm and was commented on by rear seat passengers. Inside this Leon is a genuine five seater with leg and head room to spare



with the fascia taken from the earlier models. Like all SEAT's that means practical and simple.

The touch-screen control centre is well positioned and simple to operate, which is a real bonus when driving different cars each week. Often the week has gone by the time I have mastered the controls. Why can't they all be standard?

There's the same safety levels as on the rest of the range. That means seven airbags, stability control, emergency brake assist and a tyre pressure monitoring system.

You get active front head restraints to minimise whiplash, Isofix child-seat mounting points, remote central locking and an alarm which has helped SEAT record the maximum five stars in Euro NCAP crash tests.

The test car came complete with LED head-

lamps and DAB digital radio, heated front seats, heated front washers, rain sensing wipers, light sensors and electric folding door mirrors.

I was impressed by the automatic light dipping system, which must be a big must for all manufacturers, and the driver pack, which includes lane assist. You get Bluetooth, USB input, air-con, colour touch-screen, wheel-mounted audio controls and electric front windows, so you get quite a bit for your money. It also had 17" alloys and tinted rear windows, all of which totalled £3,330 and helped the price up to £22,825.

The big competition will probably come from Skoda and Golf and SEAT is the cheaper option.

I've become a bit of a SEAT fan over the years and I can't say that I'm anything but impressed by this latest addition.

TESTED

SEAT: Leon ST

Model: SE 1.6 TDI

Cost: £19,495

Top speed: 119mph

0-62mph: 11.1secs

CO2 emissions: 99g/km

Combined fuel: 74.3mpg

Express Repairs for Minor Accident Damage



✓ Bumper scuffs

✓ Kerbed alloys



✓ Paintwork scratches

✓ Dented panels

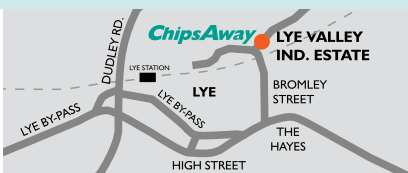
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Citroën's new Grand C4 Picasso has been named 'MPV of the Year' in the UK Car of the Year Awards (UKCOTY), an independent set of awards specifically designed to benefit UK drivers, highlighting and championing the very best cars on the market.

The UKCOTY team includes some of the most respected names in motoring journalism, covering the whole industry and all parts of the UK. Many of the judges will evaluate in excess of 300 cars a year and the combined panel reaches more than 80 million consumers a month.

The stylish new seven-seater MPV, only launched at the beginning of this year, won over the 27-strong judging panel with praise given for its 'impressive engine line-

up', 'superb functionality', 'family-friendly features' and 'feel-good factor' within the commentary.

Alongside the UKCOTY honours, the new Citroën Grand C4 Picasso has already been named BBC TopGear magazine's 'Family Car of the Year' and What Car? Magazine's 'MPV of the Year'. It is also one of just seven finalists shortlisted for Car of the Year 2014.

Available from £19,200 on-the-road, the new Grand C4 Picasso is a practical, versatile and elegant offering for the seven-seat compact MPV segment that strikes a new balance between benchmark space and engaging styling, combined with record efficiency.

The new Citroën Grand C4 Picasso stands out as the most practical, the most versatile and the most elegant product offering in the seven-seat compact MPV segment.



Stands out as the most practical, the most versatile and elegant offering for MPV compact

In terms of design, the model features a pioneering balance between best-in-class interior space and engaging exterior styling – all combined with record levels of efficiency and 'Creative Technologie'.

Highlights include: A loft-inspired interior delivering an uncluttered feel and best-in-class comfort for all passengers, technologies for well-being, including a seven-inch Touch Drive interface combined with a HD 12-inch panoramic screen and innovations

for an increasingly user-friendly drive, including an all-new 360° Vision system.

The car features ground-breaking proportions, providing an ideal combination of versatility, cabin space and accessibility, with three rows of seats for up to seven occupants.

Although the latest model is virtually the same length as its predecessor the platform has allowed Citroën's engineers to extend the wheelbase to 2.84m.



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3

Home & Services

antiques

GRANDFATHER CLOCK. In need
of some work but in good condition,
£500 ono. 01902 790667.

collectables & memorabilia

DUDLEY COLOSSEUM theatre
programmes, 1897-1898 (3).
£100 each. 01902 331502.

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BEAUTIFUL LEATHER Cream
sofa, nearly new, £300 ono.
01902 680647.

BRAND NEW brown, three piece
leather suite, still wrapped, cost
£1,000, accept £390. Unwanted gift.
Can deliver. 07818 618926.

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reclining / riser chair, cream leather,
cost £1,619. Sell £150.
Please call 0121 601 1689.

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£100 ono. Two wardrobes, £50
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anything old / unusual.
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07733 225676 or 0800 3589719.

SOFA WANTED must be very good
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Call 07774 230357.

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20821 or 07889 467889.

WANTED HORNY train sets,
locomotives and trucks. Good
condition. Cash paid. Will collect.
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EIGHTEEN MONTH OLD
BATH STORE LEFT HAND
P SHOWER BATH

White size 1700 long x 700 -
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waste, curved shower screen
and straight screen, chrome fit-
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tap, cost £800 new, still fitted
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£350 ono.
01384 394247.

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LAPTOP COMPUTER. Windows,
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£60. 07867 826483.

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Paving/Concrete Sand
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HORSE MANURE, well rotted, 10
bags £12, 20 bags £20.
Free delivery. 07522 997130.

LAWN TRACTOR 22HP
42" CUT
With collector, totally new and
unused, cost £3,500.
Will accept £1,695.
Can deliver - £50.
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Advertisers must ensure that
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gas strut, Simmons sight 39 x 50,
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Please be aware that when
purchasing a puppy there are
some simple guidelines you can
follow to ensure that you are not
purchasing from a Puppy
Farmer.

1. Try to ensure you visit the
puppy whilst it is still with its
Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a
puppy from any other location
than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any
KC documentation, if pedigree.
West Midlands News
Association publications take
great care to avoid publication of
advertisements from Puppy
Farmers we cannot accept any
liability should readers
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establishment.

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18 months old, friendly, innocu-
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boys, 1 chocolate 1 black, 2 choco-
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She is very friendly and loves a
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6 Property

accommodation to let

NOTICE TO READERS It is an
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Agencies Act 1983, for an Agency
to charge a fee simply for the regis-
tration of your requirements and/or
supplying particulars of premises to
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BRAND NEW APARTMENT For
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KINGSWINFORD 3 bed terrace, CH,
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near Bliton Town, garage, carpet,
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Coach inclusive breaks – Two days

Selected weekend departures

Saturday Night from £139.⁹⁵

Dine and Dance from £149.⁹⁵

Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing. For the Dine and Dance option see the matinee performance before heading back to the hotel for dinner and disco (conditions apply). For the Saturday Night option you will see the evening performance.

Both breaks include a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel, with full English breakfast (plus dinner for Dine and Dance options). Pick ups offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

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FORD FOCUS 1.8, 3dr, 2003. Very low mileage £2,235 ono. Telephone 07522 918456

FORD FOCUS LX, 1.6cc, 2005, alloys, air con, CL, tax Oct 14, 12 month MoT, 49,000 miles, genuine sale, £2,800. 07872 562531.

FORD FOCUS STUDIO 1.4 06/06, 5dr, red, 47,500 miles, manual, petrol, MoT November, very good condition, £2,400. 07730 341376.

FORD FOCUS TDCI, LX110, 56 reg, black, 120K, 9 months MoT, full tax, service history, good condition, drives nice, £2,195. 07955 587600.

FORD KA ZETEC, Blue, 18K, January 2012, fsh, tax only £35 per year, 3 year Ford warranty. Very good condition. £5,900 o.n.o. 01902 730722/07970 094280.

JAGUAR X-TYPE, 04 reg, diesel, all leather interior, tax, MoT, 1st to see will buy, £2,000. 07599 905276 or 01562 743652.

JAGUAR XJ8 LWB, 2001, seafrost silver, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, fsh, alarm, long MoT. £1,995 ono. 07990 664853.

JAGUAR X-TYPE SE Diesel, blue, 53 reg, 70K, MoT Nov, tax May, fsh, previous owner, company car forces sale, £3,495. 07827 931317.

KIA SEDONA 3000CC Diesel, 07 reg, 58K, tax, full MoT, 7 seats, dark blue, very good condition, £4,000. 01902 751227.

NISSAN MICRA Accento, 2008, 1.2, auto, black, 26,500 miles, 3 months Tax and MoT, £2,200. 07751 423281.

RENAULT CLIO FREEWAY, 2008, 44,362 miles, blue, 1149cc, air bag, fsh, long MoT, central locking, pas, tax, stereo, £3,100 ono. 07974 046325.

RENAULT MEGANE SCENIC DYNAMIQUE TCE 1.4 TURBO, BV59 LBU, 12,200 miles, 8 months MoT. £4,800 o.n.o. 01902 634085.

VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.4 16V 2005, FSH, full MoT, 1 lady owner from new, aircon, alloys, electronics. £1,600. 07526 56787.

VAUXHALL ASTRA Design 1.8, 5dr, black, MoT Oct 2014, short tax, alloys, tinted windows, 2005 reg, £2,295. 07780 300728.

VAUXHALL VECTRA SRI NAV, 2007, 96,250 miles, metallic, electric windows, cruise control, diesel, navigation system, new VXR alloys, as new Michelin tyres, MoT, tax. £2,800 ono. 07791 619490.

VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.6 ACTIVE, 2006, petrol, 10 months MoT, condition and spec, £3,500. For more information 01902 332246.

VW POLO 1.2, 2006, grey, built in handstree, 10 months MoT, 107,000 miles, a lovely looking car, £2,200 ono. 07708 030163.

RENAULT SCENIC, 2003, 1.6, fsh, 73,000 miles, a/c, electric pack, MoT, 2 remote keys, £1,095. Kidderminster 07971 561112.

ROVER 25, 2003, 61,030 miles, silver, electric windows, air con, MoT, leather, CD, alloys, £550 ono. 01902 893006.

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Another loss for struggling Hales side

OHHC 1sts 1 Bridgnorth 3
OLD Halesonians Hockey Club's losing streak stretched to four games, as they lost to Bridgnorth.

Hales struggled back in November, when they fell to a 3-0 defeat in Bridgnorth, but it did not get much better for the Halesowen side who are trying to fight against their current form.

Hales pressure paid off, when they took the lead through Tom Bulteel. Several chances fell to Hales, but they were unable to extend their lead. Bridgnorth stole a goal back and after the break took the lead following a penalty corner.

When Paul Harrold was shown a yellow card and spent time in the sin-bin, Bridgnorth took advantage and made it 3-1 from a quick counter-attack. Halesowen are due to travel to already relegated side Wolverhampton.

Results: Worcs 3 OHHC Ladies 1sts 1; Kings Heath 1 OHHC 2nds 1; OHHC Ladies 2nds 0 Kings Heath 3; OHHC 3rds 2 Telford 2; Sutton Coldfield 3 OHHC 4ths 3; OHHC 5ths 4 Stratford 3

Saxons get bonus try in victory

STOURBRIDGE Saxons 34
Otley 25

Though the Saxons had secured the try bonus point in the opening exchanges of the second half, a late Otley revival brought the scoreline uncomfortably close before a late Nathan Bressington strike secured the points for the home side.

The visitors opened the scoring with a penalty after Tom Jarvis was caught in possession and penalised in his own half. A set of forward drives in the Otley 22 saw fly half Gary Dipple who scored the opening try.

Mark Ireland hit back with another Otley penalty when a defender went off his feet at the tackle, but then Dipple secured a second try with a well-executed loop move to open up Otley's midfield defences.

Nigel Mukarati scored the bonus point fourth try. Otley replied with winger Nazir Karim scoring one of two tries.

Bressington sealed the deal for the Saxons.

Squad gets sweet win over Bournville

Halesowen 36 Bournville 3
HALES had last minute changes due to illness, however, the much welcomed return of second row, Rich Sawyer was a breath of fresh air to the home team.

Also full back Chris Hooper returned after knee surgery and reminded the crowd of his ability, experience and organisation in the backs. Hales came out of the blocks full on.

After only four minutes Hales won a scrum which player/coach Mark Evans took from the base. Supported by his pack Hales worked through 8 phases in dominance.

Scrum Half Nathan Jones co-ordinating, fed the backs with Hooper finding the gap to score, converted by Steve Powell.

Skipper Rich Taylor, Tom Jordan, Rich Sawyer and flanker Loz Breese were totally dominant in forward driving power and yards made.

Bournville fought back to earn a penalty to make the score. Continued pressure by Hales in all departments produced a clean ball for centre Andy Robinson to slice through the visitors defence for a copy book score.

The visitors fought back in short

Rugby

periods and looked to exert some pressure in the backs. However, a loose pass saw Rich Sawyer intercept to sprint 30 metres to score a crucial try, converted by Powell.

In the second half things were much the same, Bournville struggling to find a way through the Hales defence and the total dominance of the home side. The visitors seemed shell shocked at the power of Hales in all departments.

Another line out, another clean ball by Mark Evans, a drive for 20

metres, supported by the rampant Sawyer who fed the ever-present Tom Jordan who sprinted for the try of the match, converted by Hooper.

Hales relaxed for a while but built again, Bournville under pressure, gave penalties away and lost a player to the bin for collapsing a maul. From the penalty Nathan Jones fed Powell, Evans took the ball on and worked another phase.

Backs again into action and a wide pass to wing Simon Sabel gave him room to beat his opposite man to the corner to lead 31-3.

The crowd of more than 200

were well entertained and thought it was all over. On 80 minutes, Hales again took possession in the middle of the field, Powell filling in at scrum half for injured Nathan Jones slipped the ball to wing Luke Smith.

He took the right option this time of using his pace, he set off from his own 22 to outpace the Bournville defence for a fine try to seal the victory 36 - 3. A real positive for Hales who now sit third in the National 3 Midlands League.

This Saturday could be a deciding factor as Old Hales meet league rivals Sutton Coldfield.

Ladies show six appeal to get into semi-final

Halesowen 6 Rugby 1

THIS was a first time meeting between these two sides, in the open cup, Rugby a Premier outfit and the undefeated Yeltz side.

With Halesowen being the home side it was requested to press the visitors and force them make early mistakes. Halesowen had most of the possession early on and were looking comfortable and in control of the match from the off.

The deadlock was broken by some great work from young winger Katie Moore whose fantastic shot cannoned off the cross bar but that was the end of the play.

The ball then fell to swift winger Sophie Richards whose short pass found her team mate Sian Withall, she made no mistake from 18 yards and put Halesowen ahead.

Cylinders

The Yeltz ladies were now firing on all cylinders and had several chances to increase the lead but good keeping from the rugby goalie was frustrating the home side and their efforts to forge ahead and get a real grip on the game in the first half.

Captain Dani Reade made a fantastic through-ball which found Striker Haley Chatwin and with some wizard footwork placed managed to get the shot off and put the ball into the net.

In the second half Rugby with nothing to lose gave Halesowen a scare with some good early pressure

Football

and were awarded a penalty.

The Rugby player gave keeper Halesowen keeper Hannah Tromans no chance as she scored what would be a consolation goal for Rugby and avoid a shutout.

However, this only spurred on the Halesowen squad to raise their game and Striker Rachel Letford scored after some great work again through Richards.

Then as time was running out there were seven minutes of madness as Halesowen scored three times.

Whithall claiming a hat-trick and Chatwin finishing with a brace to bring the score up to half a dozen for the dominating Halesowen side.

The end result means that Halesowen are through to the semi-final of the Open Cup.

Halesowen manager Scott McKee, said: "I'm delighted for the girls. They played well for each other and looking good for future fixtures, they deserved to win and I am very pleased."



Sarah Hammil in the thick of the action for Halesowen as her side beat Rugby 6-1, with Sian Withall scoring a hat-trick

Foster is back in running with third

AFTER missing out on the podium last week DK athlete, Ben Foster, was back among the prizes taking third place in the Blackminster Half Marathon in a time of 1.17.47.

Elsewhere it was a weekend of 20-mile races as runners honed their training for Spring Marathons.

In the Rhayader Round the Lakes 20 Simon Hughes claimed a PB of 2.30.44 and Ingrid Cain came home in 3.42.26. In Ashby for the Aldi sponsored 20-mile Mick Quane was first of a large group of hoops in 2.30.18 from Mark Homer in 2.31.40, Graham Wildgoose 2.34.24, Mark Judge 2.35.24, Andy Litchfield 2.44.25, Cath Quane 2.53.20, Natalie Litchfield 3.35.47 and Laura Evenson in 3.49.20. There was a mass of DK vests out in the Stafford 20, a round dozen travelling the short distance for another long race.

Lorna Hulme put her good training form on show running 2.30.55 for sixth female, Marie Latreche 2.57.53, Helen Hickman 3.00.10, Helen Davies 3.01.46, Richard Tonks 3.03.47, David Garbutt 3.08.44, Liz Hettle 3.16.11, Karen Doy 3.16.32.

Even game finishes up goalless

Sporting Khalsa 0
Lye Town 0

WITH first playing third this was always going to be a close game and so it proved with very few clear cut chances for either side.

Khalsa looked to be on top of the game with several half-chances until the game was delayed after 25 minutes when the referee sustained a hamstring injury and was unable to continue. The game continued after a delay of 30 minutes once a replacement official was found. The Lye Town keeper was certainly the busier of the two keepers in the first half.

The visitors were on top of the game after the interval and had the better scoring chances which were either spurned or well defended by Khalsa. Khalsa looked lively on the break after the introduction of Reece Cottrill who went close to scoring for Khalsa.



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SPORT

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Sweet victory
Halesowen put the
heat on Bournville
Page 39

Yeltz six appeal
Unbeaten ladies are
in cup semi-final
Page 39



email: Chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Kirkham is back as boss of Robins

DUDLEY Town have welcomed back Nigel Kirkham to the club as interim manager after The Robins navigated through a difficult few weeks following the departures of key members of staff to Gornal Athletic.

Kirkham is no stranger to the club having been involved with its youth teams and also had a brief spell as joint manager with Neil Perks in early 2011. Chairman Stephen Austin feels he has made a sound appointment, who can steer the club through the remaining fixtures of the 2013/14 season.

"Nigel has come in with the blessing of the Committee and the under-21 and Under18 managers who will remain an integral part of the Management Team until season close. I thank Nigel and the managers for taking an almost impossible task to see us through to season close".

The appointment of Kirkham will also allow the club ample time to find a permanent successor to Andy Wyton and Austin is hoping to make an appointment as soon as possible.

"We have had 12 applications so far and these will continue to be assessed, a short list put together and interviews undertaken. With Nigel coming in we can now take our time with this process and ensure we get the right man."

No score for Khalsa squad

Sporting Khalsa 0 Lye 0

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The visitors were on top of the game after the interval and had the better scoring chances which were either spurned or well defended by Khalsa. Khalsa looked lively on the break after the introduction of Reece Cottrell who went close to scoring for Khalsa.

History boys march on with ninth win in row

Swindon 1 Wolves 4

WOLVES achieved their place in history on Tuesday night, but the moment wasn't as unblemished as their winning record.

The opening 45 minutes were so good that if Carlsberg did first halves...you know the rest, writes **Tim Nash**.

The French connection of Bakary Sako and Nouha Dicko gave Wolves a 3-0 half-time advantage in the most focused, dominant and hungry 45 minutes of the season to date.

Wolves took their foot off the pedal and allowed Swindon back into the game before Leon Clarke got off the mark against his old

Football

club with a classy fourth. But there was a flatness in the second-half display which led to a first goal conceded in 680 minutes after six consecutive clean sheets.

Wolves threatened in the seventh minute when James Henry darted into a gap between two defenders on the left side of the box and rifled a firm left-foot drive just wide.

Within 60 seconds, the visitors broke the deadlock when Sako headed home from Henry's cross. Wolves were devastating on

the break and Swindon were left chasing shadows. But the Robins weren't without a threat and Wolves' back line had to be alert to their attacks.

There was no let-up from Wolves, however, with Henry, Michael Jacobs, Sako and Dicko in such ruthless form.

In the 18th minute, Dicko showed the way after Sako's superb pass split the defence and beat the offside trap for his fellow Frenchman to turn inside a defender before burying a shot past keeper Tyrell Bedford.

Wolves broke again in devastating fashion 11 minutes before the interval. This time Jacobs split the defence to send Sako

powering through the middle and the winger drew Belford before sidefooting home his 12th goal of the season.

Some uncharacteristic sloppy Wolves defending allowed Swindon a reply and Smith turned Bath too easily to fire past Ikeme on 74 minutes.

Jay McEveley gave them a heart-stopping moment when his back-header bounced against the angle of post and bar four minutes from time.

But Clarke's goal from an acute angle with almost the last kick of the game ended any thoughts of a revival and sealed Wolves' place in history.

Doubts of future for Mel

PEPE MEL'S long-term Albion future remains in doubt as the club began gearing up for the biggest month in their recent history.

There were indications that the Spaniard will be given one more game at least to make his mark at The Hawthorns after defeat against Manchester United on Saturday marked the seventh winless match of his reign.

But concern is growing within the club's hierarchy with Mel so far unable to turn around the Baggies' dismal fortunes – and the former Real Betis man's grip on the job is increasingly tenuous after just eight weeks at the helm.

Albion head for Swansea on Saturday for the first of four games against clubs in the bottom half of the Premier League – a spell that could make or break their bid for survival.

After the trip to the Liberty Stadium, they face Hull away, Cardiff at home and Norwich away by April 5.

Speculation over Mel's future was rife throughout the weekend after the 3-0 defeat to United left him with just four points from his seven games in charge.

Saddlers mourn keeper Christie

WALSALL are mourning the death of former goalkeeper John Christie, who helped the club to back-to-back promotions in 1960 and 1961.

The Scot has died in Hampshire at the age of 84. A club statement said: "Everyone here at Walsall Football Club would like to pass on our sincere condolences to his family."

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Kettleby, Telford, Thursday March 13

TOP SPOT AGAIN AS YELTZ TRIUMPH

Gresley 0 Halesowen 2

HALESOWEN gained three priceless points against mid-table side Gresley, pushing the Yeltz side back into the top spot.

There were two changes to the Yeltz side, as Nigel Penney took the place of the absent Tom Tonks, and Brendan Kelly stood in for Asa Charlton.

Halesowen took the lead early on, as Ben Haseley was pushed to the ground in the penalty area by Jamie Barrett and Iyseden Christie was easily able to send the goalkeeper the wrong way and put the ball into the bottom right hand corner.

Gresley kept fighting though, as Eric Graves burst into the Yeltz penalty area, but his on-target shot was well saved by Sargeant on the 10 minute mark.

Dominant

But Halesowen were the more dominant side. Haseley showed his more threatening side, as he burst through the Gresley defence, but he hit the ball too well, and the ball bounced off the underside of the crossbar and back to Haseley whose headed attempt was weak, and the ball went wide of the goal.

It wasn't long before the Yeltz claimed another goal, as the Gresley defence couldn't deal with the attacking presence of Haseley as he gathered the ball from the halfway line, ran into the penalty area and slotted the ball easily under the outtrunning Mats Morch to double Halesowen's advantage.

The second half proved

Football

to be a quiet affair as Halesowen went into defensive mode, and Gresley struggled to get through.

The best chance of the half came from Gresley, as Alex Steadman took the ball round the outstretching hands of Matt Sargeant, but his attempted shot was blocked by Curtis Tilt.

The closing stages of the game gave Danny Waldron and Colin Smith a chance to gain some experience.

Halesowen claimed another three crucial points that put them back on top, possibly closer to the title.

Halesowen: Matt Sargeant, Kristian Green, Brendan Kelly, Aaron Forde, Joe Hull, Curtis Tilt, Aaron Griffiths, Nigel Penney, Iyseden Christie (Daniel Waldron 87'), Ben Haseley (Colin Smith 91'), Neil Mackenzie (Tony Chard 91') **Unused Subs:** Sam Pearson, Asa Charlton.

Gresley: Mats Morch, Mitch Hanson (Liam Guest 18'), Lucas Harrison (Zibusiso Nyatito 45'), Marek Strzyzewski, Jamie Barrett, Eric Graves, John Guy, Sam Grice (Michael Lyons 67'), Alex Steadman, Rob Spencer, Paolo Piliero. **Unused Subs:** Royce Turville, Dean Withers.

Heathens revving up for the new season



Cradley Heath speedway team at the start of the 2014 season against Coventry in the Travel Plus Trophy on March 21. From left: Will Pottinger, Steve Worrall, Matt Williamson, Max Clegg, Paul Starke, Danny Phillips, Tom Perry and Nathan Greaves

Our Plaice

Monday & Tuesday
ALL DAY SPECIAL - SMALL COD & CHIPS £2.99

Wednesday & Thursday
ALL DAY SPECIAL - LARGE PLAICE & CHIPS £5.49

Friday & Saturday 12 noon-5pm
Free Peas or Curry with and Fish & Chips at the value of £5.25 or more

Sunday's Only 16.30-20.30
SPECIALS

Cod & Chips £4.99
Plaice & Chips £4.99
Haddock & Chips £4.99
Chicken Breast & Chips £3.75

FREE Curry or Peas with any of the above, please ask

OUR PLAICE, DUDLEY ROAD, HALESOWEN TEL: 0121 550 0229